The New
REPUBLIC
JULY 1, 2009 • $4.95

HEALTH CARE It's On, Baby!

CAN WE TRUST *the* INSURERS?
JONATHAN COHN

IT COULD FAIL AGAIN
STANLEY B. GREENBERG

WHY PATIENTS SHOULDN'T BE DOCTORS
SHERWIN B. NULAND

EMANUEL BROTHER, M.D.
NOAM SCHEIBER

Sotto Voce
The Sonia Sotomayor You Don't Know
JEFFREY ROSEN

Plus

OBAMA *in* CAIRO
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL CROWLEY

CULTURE *and the* CONSTITUTION
GORDON S. WOOD

THE ROMANCE *of* ISAAC ROSENFELD
ADAM KIRSCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cancer · Alzheimer's · HIV/AIDS · Parkinson's

Where is the world finding answers?

Biotechnology

More than 325 million people worldwide have been helped by the **more than 200 drugs and vaccines** developed through biotechnology. **Future breakthroughs** may lead to **treatments** and even **cures** for some of the world's most debilitating and rare diseases.

Biotechnology also helps drive our nation's innovation economy, creating high-wage, high-value jobs with a high multiplier effect. The more than **1.3 million Americans employed in the biosciences** help **create an additional 6.2 million jobs**, for business services, contractors and other vendors.

And we're just getting started.

If you are looking for answers to some of our biggest challenges visit www.IAmBiotech.org/learnmore

We're working on answers. For all of us.

Let's work together.

www.IAmBiotech.org/learnmore

Bio
BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

VOLUME 240 WASHINGTON, JULY 1, 2009 NUMBER 4,862

Public Enemy

The debate over health care reform is full of controversies, but none has received as much attention as the call to create a public insurance option. The idea, in a nutshell, is to create a true government-run insurance program—something that looks vaguely like Medicare—in which people can enroll voluntarily. The proposal found its way into the platforms of the leading Democratic candidates, including Barack Obama, and eventually into memos circulating on Capitol Hill. Along the way, it's somehow become the litmus test for reform on both sides of the ideological spectrum. Liberals see it as an essential element of any package, the very definition of "real" health care reform. Conservatives are equally adamant that a public plan would be disastrous—enough to make reform itself worth opposing.

In reality, this conception of the public plan is not quite right. The only litmus test of reform should be whether it achieves its goals: making sure everybody can get timely medical care without experiencing financial ruin; reducing the cost of care overall, so that it no longer imposes such a serious economic burden on individuals and on society as a whole; and improving the quality of care, so that it focuses on prevention and actually makes people better once they are sick. How we achieve these goals is far less important than whether we achieve them.

So the proper question to ask about a public plan is whether it's necessary to meet those objectives. Various industry groups, most notably the insurance industry, say no. Conservatives, including those sincerely determined to improve health care, agree. And whatever the biases of each group, they are technically correct. It is possible to create a high-functioning universal health care system without creating a public insurance option. And the proof, ironically, comes from the very place conservatives love to disparage: Europe. Two nations, the Netherlands and Switzerland, have health care systems that provide convenient, high-quality care to all citizens—for much less money than Americans pay now. And they do so exclusively through private insurance. If it were possible to re-create those systems here, the United States would be in good shape.

The problem is that it's nearly impossible to re-create those systems, in which government regulation is far more aggressive than anything American policymakers are contemplating. Swiss insurers can't even make profits from the basic benefits package; Dutch health care has heavy price controls. Both countries also have stronger traditions of social solidarity and corporate responsibility. The rules work, in part, because insurers feel duty-bound to follow them.

American insurers have no such tradition. On the contrary, the history of American health care is replete with examples of insurers—like all industries—trying to maximize their profits, often in ways that leave Americans without the financial protection or medical care that they need. In the mid-twentieth century, it was the entrance of for-profit insurers to the market that set off the chain of events that led to the situation we have today—a situation in which people who have pre-existing medical conditions frequently cannot afford to buy coverage on their own. And, in recent decades, it was the transformation of managed care into a for-profit industry that left Americans with medical needs at the mercy of insurers that sometimes made clinical judgments based on profits and losses.

In principle, effective government regulation can curb this behavior. In practice, insurers have demonstrated an uncanny ability to circumvent regulations. Just ask the senior citizens duped by deceptive marketing of Medicare supplemental insurance over the years, or the many working-age Americans who bought private insurance on their own and filed a claim, only to have their carriers rescind coverage retroactively after deciding there was some hidden pre-existing condition in their distant medical histories.

In this sort of world—the world of American health care as it exists, rather than how it seems in some idyllic conceptions—the case for a public insurance plan is strong. Very strong. Government can decree that its insurance program provide coverage to anybody who seeks it—and that it cover all necessary medical services, without secret gimmickry to wring profits from treatment denials. The government can offer coverage cheaply, by taking advantage of its bargaining power and economies of scale. And, insofar as the goal of reform is to reduce the cost of care in the long run, by attacking the medical habits that encourage excessive or ineffective care, the government can make sure the public plan pays for services in ways that promote the most effective treatments.

The hackneyed critique against a public plan draws analogies to Medicare—a strange argument, insofar as Medicare is a highly popular program that stacks up favorably to its private sector alternatives. The more intelligent criticisms focus on whether a new public program would set prices too low, starving providers of resources and disrupting care, or take unfair advantage of access to taxpayer money in order to underprice private insurers and drive them out of business. But these are reasons to build in safeguards—safeguards that the leading advocates for a public plan have already embraced. They are not reasons to water down the idea beyond recognition, let alone ditch it altogether. The public plan may not be the essence of reform. But it certainly should be part of it. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Obama Method

First he did it to Boehner, now Ahmadinejad.

JONATHAN CHAIT

THE THING THAT people haven't figured out about President Obama's conduct of foreign policy is that it's the same as his conduct of domestic policy. Obama believes in the power of negotiation and public dialogue to split his adversaries—Republicans at home, Islamists abroad—and strengthen his own position. Obama's speech in Cairo to the Muslim world was simply the foreign analogue of his dealings with the GOP.

Obama's method begins with attempts to find common ground, expressions of respect for the adversary's core beliefs, and profuse hope for cooperation. In his iconic 2004 speech to the Democratic National Convention, Obama famously announced that Democrats, too, "worship an awesome God." In his Cairo speech, Obama pointed to the contributions and freedoms of American Muslims. In both speeches, Obama signaled cultural respect by adapting the other side's own rhetorical formulations—invoking "a belief in things not seen" (2004) or calling the Middle East the region where Islam "was first revealed" (Cairo).

This rhetoric removes the locus of debate from the realm of tribal conflict—red state versus blue state, Islam versus America—and puts it onto specific questions—Is the American health care system fair? Is terrorism justified?—where Obama believes he can win support from soft adherents of the opposing camp.

Naturally, Obama's pacific expressions tend to alarm the more hawkish elements of his own camp, who interpret his idealistic rhetoric as naïveté or weakness. A few months before the 2008 presidential primary, columnist E.J. Dionne reported, "Several Democrats also said Clinton's claim that she can deal with the Republican 'attack machine' rings truer to an angry party than Obama's call for an end to partisan polarization."

Democratic partisans think the enemy is vicious and must be met with uncompromising force. That's exactly how conservative foreign policy hawks feel about the world. Unsurprisingly, the right-wing foreign policy critique of Obama today sounds eerily like the partisan Democratic critique of Obama during the primary.

In January 2008, Obama told a newspaper editorial board that Ronald Reagan provided a "sense of dynamism and entrepreneurship that had been missing." Paul Krugman complained, "Where in his remarks was the clear declaration that Reaganomics failed?" Likewise, in his Cairo speech, Obama touted the historic role of Muslims in the United States. Conservative pundit David Frum complained: "One of the most disturbing things about the Cairo speech is the persistent misrepresentation of history. It is really absurd to say that Islam for example has 'always been a part of America's story.'"

Obama probably realizes that Muslims have played a marginal role in American life throughout most of its history. He also probably believes that the U.S. economy in the 1970s suffered primarily from oil shocks and irresponsible monetary policy rather than from the absence of a Reaganesque cheerleader for entrepreneurship. But Obama's method entails small acts of intellectual dishonesty in the pursuit of common ground.

Critics such as Krugman and Frum are correct that surrendering intellectual ground comes at a cost. Our most successful presidents articulate clear, forceful public rationales for their beliefs—think of Roosevelt or Truman excoriating reactionary Republicans at home, or Truman, Kennedy, or Reagan standing up to the Soviets internationally. It is a mistake, however, to view Obama's strategy as an act of submission.

Consider how Obama explained his approach toward Iran during a recent interview with *Newsweek*:

> Now, will it work? We don't know. And I assure you, I'm not naive about the difficulties of a process like this. If it doesn't work, the fact that we have tried will strengthen our position in mobilizing the international community, and Iran will have isolated itself, as opposed to a perception that it seeks to advance that somehow it's being victimized by a U.S. government that doesn't respect Iran's sovereignty.

This is a perfect summation of Obama's strategy. It does not presuppose that his adversaries are people of goodwill who can be reasoned with. Rather, it assumes that, by demonstrating his own goodwill and interest in accord, Obama can win over a portion of his adversaries' constituents as well as third parties. Obama thinks he can move moderate Muslim opinion, pressure bad actors like Iran to negotiate, and, if Iran fails to comply, encourage other countries to isolate it. The strategy works whether or not Iran makes a reasonable agreement.

The results remain to be seen. But it eerily resembles the way Obama has already isolated the GOP leadership. Obama began his presidency by elaborately courting the opposition party. Republicans in Congress believed that, by flamboyantly withholding cooperation, they could deny Obama his stated goal of bipartisan harmony and thus render him a failure. Instead, they wound up handing Obama the alternative victory of appearing to be the reasonable party. Polls showed that the public, by overwhelming margins, believed that Obama was trying to work with Republicans and that Republicans were not reciprocating.

Likewise, by defusing the complaint among Islamists that the United States disrespects their religion, Obama can more easily force the Iranian leadership to negotiate on the terms of its stated goals. This is actually "a hard-nosed tactic of community organizers," as *American Prospect* editor Mark Schmitt wrote in 2007. "One way to deal with that kind of bad-faith opposition is to draw the person in," Schmitt explained, "treat them as if they were operating in good faith, and draw them into a conversation about how they actually would solve the problem."

This apparent paradox is one reason Obama's political identity has eluded easy definition. On the one hand, you have a disciple of the radical community organizer Saul Alinsky turned ruthless Chicago politician. On the other hand, there is the conciliatory post-partisan idealist. The mistake here is in thinking of these two notions as opposing poles. In reality it's all the same thing. Obama's defining political trait is the belief that conciliatory rhetoric *is* a ruthless strategy. ◆

TRB

From Washington

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

July 1, 2009

The Editors	1	**PUBLIC ENEMY** *The government option that has D.C. at daggers drawn.*
		TRB
Jonathan Chait	2	**THE OBAMA METHOD** *First he did it to Boehner, now Ahmadinejad.*
		THE MALL
Joshua Kurlantzick	5	*Is Kim Jong Il's son any less insane?*
Alexandra Starr	6	*David Cameron sheds his posh.*
Michael Crowley	10	*Egypt versus Iran.*
Stanley B. Greenberg	13	*Why health care reform could fail again.*
		FEATURES
Jeffrey Rosen	16	**SOTTO VOCE** *The Sonia Sotomayor you don't know.*
Jonathan Cohn	21	**THE OPERATOR** *Why is the most powerful health care lobbyist playing nice?*
	24	**YOUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: A MAP**
Noam Scheiber	26	**ZEKE'S ANATOMY** *Meet the nice Emanuel brother. Well, the nicest.*
Martin Peretz	30	**NARRATIVE DISSONANCE** *What the Cairo speech got wrong.*
		BOOKS AND THE ARTS
Stanley Kauffmann	34	**FILMS ONE AND MANY** *Séraphine de Senlis's talent; fiction and fact merge.*
Mark Mazower	35	**BOOKS THE EVIL THAT MEN DO** ***Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1918*** *by Grigoris Balakian, translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag;* ***Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1923*** *by Ryan Gingeras;* ***My Grandmother: A Memoir*** *by Fethiye Çetin*
Stuart Dischell	38	**POEM PLEASURE HARVEST**
Adam Kirsch	40	**BOOKS THE BINDING OF ISAAC** ***Rosenfeld's Lives: Fame, Oblivion, and the Furies of Writing*** *by Steven J. Zipperstein*
Gordon S. Wood	44	**BOOKS REVOLUTIONARY MANNERS** ***The State as a Work of Art: The Cultural Origins of the Constitution*** *by Eric Slauter*
Sherwin B. Nuland	48	**BOOKS AUTONOMY AMUCK** ***Patient, Heal Thyself: How the "New Medicine" Puts the Patient in Charge*** *by Robert M. Veatch*
Peter Campion	51	**POEM JULY: GILE MOUNTAIN**
Rosanna Warren	52	**BOOKS LIFE AS A POEM** ***Songbook: The Selected Poems Of Umberto Saba*** *translated by George Hochfield and Leonard Nathan*
		WASHINGTON DIARIST
Leon Wieseltier	56	**A FOOTNOTE**

Cover illustration by Stephen Savage

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS *Jenna Golden, 202-508-4442, jgolden@tnr.com* | *Jaime Vasil, 202-508-4482, jvasil@tnr.com*
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR *Sheila Menn, 202-508-4446, smenn@tnr.com* | ACCOUNT MANAGER *Lauren Sims, 202-508-4462, lsims@tnr.com*
ONLINE AD COORDINATOR *Katrina Galsim 202-508-4465, kgalsim@tnr.com*

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 240, Number 11, Issue 4,862, July 1, 2009. (Printed in the United States on June 12, 2009.) Published bi-weekly (except for skipped publication dates of April 29 and December 16, 2009) at 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Lauren Sims at (202) 508-4444. Yearly subscriptions, $79.97; foreign, $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling).

© 2009 by TNR II, LLC.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Member, BPA Worldwide. Send letters and unsolicited manuscripts to letters@tnr.com. Poetry submissions must be e-mailed to poetry@tnr.com. **For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.tnr.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everyone agrees we need to fix health care.

HR knows how.

The **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)** and its 250,000 members support the goal of providing all Americans with access to meaningful, affordable health care. Right now, more than 100 million people have health care benefits provided through employers. We're committed to helping Washington's leaders build upon this system and improve it – to reduce costs, expand access, improve quality through better information, and promote effective wellness programs. HR professionals know how … because they're on the front lines of this critical issue every day.

SHRM™
SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

www.shrm.org/SHRMisHR

SHRM is HR ... and HR is meeting the challenges of a changing world.

09-0376-New Republic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Mall

Daddy Dearest

Is Kim Jong Il's son any less insane?

For years, a prime method for decoding the impenetrable North Korean regime has been the Dear Leader's sushi chef, a defector named Kenji Fujimoto. When I met him in Tokyo several years ago, he looked as if he had just stepped off a construction site. His body was squat, his face rough. From his vantage in the kitchen, Fujimoto had been an astute observer of Kim Jong Il's court—and the struggle within that court to win favor.

Years ago, Fujimoto began noticing the growing prominence of Kim Jong Il's youngest son, Kim Jong Un. He had grown close to his father; a special bond had formed. On the surface, Kim Jong Un seemed like a nice boy, dutiful and respectful. Fujimoto, however, sensed these were mere exterior traits. He sensed that Kim Jong Un was "ruthless" and "tough inside." In his memoir about his time in the household, Fujimoto captured the youngest son in a chilling passage: "When Jong Un shook hands with me, he stared at me with a vicious look. I cannot forget the look in the Prince's eyes."

It is said that Kim Jong Il, who has ruled North Korea since his father died in 1994, has suffered at least one stroke, a health record that focused his mind on his successor. And, apparently, his choice for the job is Kim Jong Un, now reportedly 26 years old. No formal announcement has been made, but there are all the telltale signs: schoolchildren invoking Kim Jong Un in their songs, instructions that diplomats pay homage to him.

Perhaps all this tumult within the regime can explain its particularly belligerent behavior in recent months. Will the new leader put an end to this chapter? There are only a mere handful of other clues about the young man who will take over the Hermit Kingdom. And it is essential to examine them closely to determine whether Kim Jong Un is as ruthless as the chef describes.

When I first heard the name Kim Jong Un from the chef, it meant little to me. The only public photo of him is a grainy shot, taken when he was about eleven; it shows a sweet-looking child with the same broad face and thick lips as his infamous dad. Unlike his eldest brother, the beefy Kim Jong Nam, who the Japanese once deported for traveling under a false passport, Kim Jong Un had never made news of any kind—not through scandals, not through speeches. His upbringing was shrouded; he supposedly attended the International School of Berne in Switzerland under a pseudonym, though no one knows for sure. For years, many North Korea–watchers didn't even know he existed.

Kim Jung Un is the son of the Dear Leader's third and most beloved wife, Koh Young Hee, a dancer from a state-run troupe. He could be spoiled. And, like his father, he's a big-time drinker. The father's taste for imported liquor consumed at wild parties is something that Fujimoto knows well. At one late-night party, the Dear Leader had the chef's pubic hair shaved, a humiliating gag.

The parallels between father and son extend beyond their extracurricular pursuits. In North Korea's elite circles, Kim Jong Un was known for his cruel, icy, and often domineering personality, a mentality that could be perfect for running a gulag state or playing a dangerous game of nuclear chicken. According to Fujimoto, these parallels between father and son were precisely the reason that the Dear Leader gravitated toward Kim Jong Un.

Fed up with GOP guff for their outings, the Obamas spend a quiet evening at home

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet even if Kim Jong Un proves as tough as his father, the power of the Kim family brand might be diluted. The Dear Leader's father and the state's founder, Kim Il Sung, boasted revolutionary credentials and dominated North Korea, creating an exhaustive personality cult and keeping tight control of the armed forces. Despite his Dear Leader moniker, Kim Jong Il has never generated the same levels of devotion or complete control of his country. Concessions to competing power bastions, namely the military, have been necessary. (That's why the army has been showered with food and resources, even as the rest of the nation has starved.) Andrei Lankov, probably the foremost North Korea–watcher in Seoul, told me that Kim Jong Il rules less by fiat than is commonly believed; he has to reach some degree of consensus with top generals before making decisions. "Kim Jong Il cannot do whatever he wants," Lankov said.

Kim Jong Un will have to cede even more power than his dad. Most likely, he will rule in tandem with the Dear Leader's brother-in-law, Chang Song-Taek, who controls the North Korean secret police. Many analysts believe that Chang has been running the country in recent months, while Kim Jong Il recovers. (When I have asked former North Korean defectors about Chang, they have responded as if I'd mentioned Keyser Soze; most have clammed up entirely, while others have detailed the horrors of his agents.) The young Kim may also hand over more power to senior military leaders. Unlike his father, who spent more than a decade building ties to top generals before assuming power, Kim Jong Un hasn't had nearly as long to cultivate relationships.

Is there any chance that Kim could usher in a period of perestroika? American analysts of North Korea have long insisted that there is a moderate group within Pyongyang's military that wants Chinese-style economic reforms. And, even if this weren't the case, a larger governing role for the army might help constrain the craziness that inherently flows from an erratic monomaniacal autocrat. That might be wishful thinking. More likely is the possibility that the accession of the country's new leader might end Pyongyang's nuclear provocations—which may be a tactic to rally domestic opinion around the new leadership.

Then again, maybe the world is underestimating the younger Kim. More than a decade ago, when his father took control, most North Korea analysts believed the pudgy playboy wouldn't last long before a military junta sidelined him. Since then, Kim Jong Il has developed a nuclear weapon, despite international sanctions, and kept the military at bay. If his son, with a nuclear arsenal at his command, has inherited his old man's disposition, imagine what he can accomplish.

Joshua Kurlantzick

North Korea's next monomaniacal leader as a young man.

Head of His Class

David Cameron sheds his posh.

To the unschooled eye, the photograph of the 1987 class of the Oxford University Bullingdon Club could be mistaken for a 100-year-old image. The ten young men crowding the frame are dressed in long tails and blue bowties and pose on marble steps, most of them studiously looking away from the camera. But this is a relatively recent photo of members of the aristocratic, and destructive, drinking club: Participants honor the unofficial motto—"I like the sound of breaking glass"—by getting drunk and trashing private property. It was reportedly taken before a rowdy escapade, which ended when members broke a restaurant window and six were jailed overnight.

Some two decades later, the picture became ubiquitous in the British press, thanks to the presence of one young man, standing in the upper left hand corner of the snapshot: He is David Cameron, who today serves as leader of the British Conservative Party and who is poised to move into Number 10 Downing Street if the Tories win the next general election, which will take place within twelve months. Cameron, who is just 42, had been the dark-horse candidate before he beat more seasoned Tory members in the 2005 leadership race. For a public eager to learn more about their potential PM, the Bullingdon picture seemed to fill in some blanks—and not in the Tory's favor.

Resentment toward those at the top of the ladder in Britain can be fierce. Accents and postal codes make one's rank instantly recognizable, and those born into the working class often feel looked down upon even if they ascend to professional jobs. Meanwhile, the "posh" can seem to lead effortless, gilded lives: Bullingdon members not only pay for the glass they break in cash, but also generally do so with high-denomination notes—an unmistakable cue that this crew has the status and deep pockets to play by its own set of rules.

The class dynamic is a major reason Conservatives had not been led by a blue blood in the four decades before Cameron emerged. Margaret Thatcher, the daughter of a grocer, is a better communicator of a free market and law-and-order platform than a "posh" politician, because she doesn't have to labor under the suspicion that she is merely safeguarding the interests of her class. Still, fielding leaders of relatively humble backgrounds didn't make Conservatives more popular: By the time Cameron took over, in 2005, the Tories were known as the "nasty party," in the words of the organization's own secretary of state for work and pensions. The party's emphasis on tax cuts and its rhetorical broadsides against welfare moms, gays, and immigrants looked retrograde and contributed to three consecutive general election defeats from 1997 to 2005.

So Cameron's rise signals a distinct shift, one made possible by the leader's careful presentation of class. Despite his Bullingdon baggage (rumor has it that Tory donors ponied up a substantial sum to have the photograph withdrawn from circulation), Cameron has managed to seem in sync with average Britons. A year and a half into his tenure, he stayed with an inner-city Muslim

REUTERS/KENJI FUJIMOTO/LANDOV

Department of Corrections

Daniel Fried served as U.S. ambassador to Poland from 1997 until 2000, not in the 1980s, as was stated in "Prisoners Dilemma" (June 17). We regret the error.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

9 billion

people to feed. A changing climate.

NOW WHAT?

Experts say we'll need to double agricultural output by 2050 to feed a growing world. That's challenge enough. But with a changing climate, the challenge becomes even greater.

Providing abundant and accessible food means putting the latest science-based tools in farmers' hands, including advanced hybrid and biotech seeds. Monsanto's advanced seeds not only significantly increase crop yields, they use fewer key resources – like land and fuel – to do it. That's a win-win for people, and the earth itself.

Producing more. Conserving more. Improving farmers' lives. That's sustainable agriculture. And that's what Monsanto is all about.

The world's farmers will need to double food production by 2050. Biotechnology can help.

MONSANTO imagine®

Learn more at: **www.ProduceMoreConserveMore.com**

PRODUCING MORE | CONSERVING MORE | IMPROVING FARMERS' LIVES

© 2009 Monsanto Co. Monsanto Imagine and the Vine Design are trademarks of Monsanto Technology LLC.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family and served as a teaching assistant in a public school for two days. He's pushed for policies that would allow parents more time with their children and publicly took parental leave after his second son was born.

Now, Labour has descended into a tailspin, the result of an economic crisis and a financial scandal that nearly cost Prime Minister Gordon Brown his office. The disorder is, of course, a boon for an opposition politician, but Cameron has also made his own luck. By pushing moderate policies and positioning himself as a modern, in-touch leader, he's made his party electable again. And perhaps most surprising is the fact that Cameron's blue blood may actually have helped.

Tory leader David Cameron: I'm not that *blue-blood!*

There is a distinct "David Cameron is just like you" message woven into biographical nuggets the conservative leader offers to the press. In interviews, he has confided that he's a fan of "Desperate Housewives" and the band The Killers. In March 2008, he threw his home open to TV cameras, and footage of the politician feeding his daughter Cheerios was beamed across the airwaves.

Nonetheless, no one is going to confuse the politician for a middle-class bloke. Cameron is the son of a successful stockbroker; descended from King William IV, he graduated from Eton (one of the oldest and most prestigious boarding schools in the United Kingdom) before attending Oxford. Tall, confident, and polished, Cameron's countenance, framed by short brown hair, seems perpetually shiny. He owns a spacious home in London and an impressive country house in Oxfordshire. And he is surrounded by peers of equal standing: His wife, Samantha, is the daughter of a baronet; his second-in-command, George Osborne, is heir to a baronetcy and was a member of Bullingdon a few years after Cameron; and, at one point, more than a dozen of the leader's top advisers were Old Etonians.

Indeed, into his adulthood, Cameron enjoyed remarkable good fortune. As a fresh Oxford graduate, he was hired into the Conservative Research Department, which devises policies for the party and has long served as a training ground for ambitious would-be politicians. In 1992, Cameron worked on Prime Minister John Major's come-from-behind reelection victory, where the winning message portrayed Labour as hopelessly wedded to tax hikes. And the next year, he was serving as a special adviser to Michael Howard when the then–home secretary famously bellowed "prison works!" in his speech to the national Tory conference.

Soon afterward, Cameron commenced what would be his sole professional experience outside of politics, a seven-year stint as head of corporate affairs at the media group Carlton Communications. The Conservatives, meanwhile, went into eclipse. While Cameron won a seat in Parliament in 2001, his success was not shared by the party on a national level: In that election, they endured their second shellacking to Tony Blair–led Labour. After the Tories' third consecutive loss to the Labourites in 2005, Cameron was selected to head his party on a platform promising to fundamentally remake the organization. "I said when I launched my campaign that we need to change in order to win," Cameron declared in his acceptance speech. "Now that I have won, we will change."

While a move to the center was arguably necessary if the Tories harbored hope of assuming power again, the potential drawbacks of making a "toff" the face of the Tories added urgency to the project. "When you have as many Etonians as Cameron does in his cabinet, you'd better have a plan to help working-class children get better educations," observes one London journalist. Cameron clearly took this lesson to heart. But the death of his oldest child, Ivan, earlier this year—the six-year-old had suffered from cerebral palsy and severe epilepsy from birth—also seemed to touch Cameron's politics. While conservatives have long been charged with harboring ambitions to dismantle Britain's socialized medicine system, Cameron points to his many midnight excursions to the emergency room with Ivan as proof that he would never starve the National Health Service (NHS) of funds. "When your family relies on the NHS all the time—day after day, night after night—you know how precious it is," he declared in his speech at the national Conservative conference three years ago.

This April, a month and a half after Ivan's death, I saw the leader give an address on the environment to a small group gathered at a nature reserve in Oxfordshire. Despite the personal loss he'd just suffered, Cameron came across as upbeat and energetic: He strode purposefully to the lectern and launched into an impassioned defense of the green agenda. But the subtext was unmistakably about establishing the politician's man-of-the-people bona fides. He periodically looked up from his text to flash a smile and laced the talk with long passages from Dr. Seuss's environmental parable *The Lorax*, the favorite bedtime reading of the two children he had after Ivan, Nancy and Elwen. "'Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,'" Cameron quoted in Seuss's trademark rhythm, "'nothing is going to get better. It's not.'"

AFP PHOTO/SHAUN CURRY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Self-employed Americans across the country are asking for affordable health care... **over a million of them are REALTORS®**

Unlike many in the work force who have an employer to help offset their health insurance costs, the self employed do not. They pay the full amount of their health insurance coverage. These entrepreneurs are vital to a healthy economy and to our communities. They deserve access to a health care plan they can afford.

Congress: As the health reform debate moves forward, don't forget the self-employed.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
REALTOR®
The Voice for Real Estate®

To learn more, logon to **www.realtor.org**

*REALTORS® are real estate professionals who are members of the National Association of REALTORS®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As leader, Cameron has very carefully pulled together an agenda that bares a "this is not your father's Tory party" stamp. Indeed, on social issues, Cameron occasionally tacks even further left than the Labour party. He has vigorously attempted to erase from public consciousness the days when a prominent Tory politician alleged that single mothers were getting pregnant to obtain public housing: Last year, for example, he denounced a Labour proposal pushing parents on the dole whose children were at least a year old to commit to spending several hours a week in activities like putting together a resumé. "[P]rodding, pushing, cajoling [mothers of young children into work] is wrong," he declared. Cameron has also directed a Tory turnaround on gay rights. While as recently as 2003 the politician supported retaining a provision that forbids local authorities and schools from presenting homosexuality in a favorable light, he now says he endorses civil partnerships for same-sex couples.

Perhaps what has received the most attention is Cameron's trumpeting of the green agenda. In the campaign before the 2006 elections, he crafted a new message for Conservatives: "Vote blue, go green," a surprising pairing, as the Tories were much better known for their tax policies than their recycling zeal. In addition to regularly delivering stemwinders on the perils of global warming, Cameron has announced that no new coal-fired power stations could be built under a Tory government unless they were outfitted with technology to bring their carbon-dioxide emissions down. The leader has also ostentatiously adopted a green lifestyle: His house sports wind turbines on its roof, and he bikes to work, a habit that caused him some embarrassment when it was revealed he'd been trailed by a chauffeur-driven car carrying his briefcase and dress shoes. Neil O'Brien, director of the center-right think tank Policy Exchange, notes that when he asks focus groups participants to pair Cameron with an automobile, about 80 percent of the time they choose a Rolls-Royce; in the remainder of cases, they select a bicycle.

While some Tory faithful have grumbled about the openness to gay partnerships and the downplaying of tax cuts, there seems to be an understanding that Cameron arguably had no choice but to "detoxify the brand." "Tactics are so dominant for them," says Tim Montgomerie, founder of the website Conservative Home, who served as an adviser to the Tory leadership when Cameron entered Parliament. "When you ask, 'Why are you proposing that particular tax scheme?,' they respond, 'Because it works with this particular class of voter.' " And it does seem to be working: Barring the unforeseen, the Conservative dry spell in general elections will come to a close by this time next year. "If you think of political parties as shops, before Cameron became leader, people weren't even looking into the Conservative shop window," says Peter Kellner, president of the YouGov opinion polling organization. "They are now."

What may have sealed the deal for some former Labourite voters this spring was how Cameron handled revelations that members of the House of Commons had looked to taxpayers to shell out for everything from fake mortgages to fancy toilet seats. While the tawdry expenses scandal horrified the British public, Brown was slow to respond, contributing to the bloodbath the party endured in the recent European Parliament and local elections. In contrast, when it was revealed that Tory members had asked to be reimbursed for moat-dredging, a duck island, and revamping servants' quarters, Cameron quickly pronounced himself "unbelievably angry" and disciplined the offenders. To be sure, Cameron did not emerge unscathed: At press time, questions were beginning to percolate about government contributions to the mortgage on his country house. Still, Cameron receives plaudits even from liberals for his decisiveness. "He showed he had his finger on the popular pulse," says Jonathan Freedland, an opinion writer for *The Guardian*. "He used plain, simple language, speaking the way people in pubs were talking about it."

Still, if he does move to Number 10 Downing Street, Cameron will become the nineteenth Etonian to have governed England. And there may be a reason for that. While the days when the upper class called the shots are gone, those at the top can still elicit begrudging respect from the public. "I don't know if people even admit it to themselves," says the pollster Kellner. "But hidden in the British psyche is this sense that we want our rulers to be more highly educated, and perhaps more competent, than ourselves." One of Cameron's most valuable calling cards may turn out to be his palpable self-assurance. After watching Cameron give his *Lorax* speech, Marcia Titcombe, a homemaker in Oxfordshire, said she wished "he would hurry up and get into" the prime ministership. Reflecting on his appeal, she gave this explanation: "There is something self-confident about him, don't you think?"

Alexandra Starr

Alexandra Starr writes about politics and immigration for The New York Times Magazine, Slate, and The American Scholar.

Scheme of Rivals

Egypt versus Iran.

Before Barack Obama spoke to the Muslim world from Cairo in June, the president did some sightseeing. His first stop was the Sultan Hassan mosque, a 700-year-old marvel of Islamic architecture, where he and a *hijab*-clad Hillary Clinton gawked at towering arches and intricate carvings. But Obama didn't stop at the mosque next door, known as Al Rifai, which houses a monument that explains much about the politics of the wider Middle East. A few steps past its entrance sits a thick marble slab cordoned off with velvet red rope. The pale green stone bears a coat of arms and an ornate inscription written in Persian: "His Imperial Majesty, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran."

This is the tomb of the last Iranian monarch, who fled his country just before Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic revolution and was given asylum by Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat. That was more than an act of humanity; it was an affront to the revolutionary mullahs in Tehran, who had been demanding their deposed leader's extradition. Sadat had been feuding with the mullahs since he had negotiated peace with Israel at Camp David in 1978. At the time, Khomeini had called Sadat a traitor to the Palestinians and to Muslims everywhere, while Sadat, a Sunni Muslim, branded the Shia Khomeini "a lunatic madman … who has turned Islam into a mockery." Death did nothing to lessen the feud: When Pahlavi died of cancer in July 1980, Sadat granted him a state funeral and buried him at Al Rifai, in a room by the tombs of two former Egyptian kings. And, when a young Egyptian soldier named Khalid Islambouli emptied his machine gun into Sadat a year later, Tehran promptly issued a postage stamp in Islambouli's honor, named a street in Tehran after him, and painted a nearby building with a four-story mural of the glorious martyr (he was captured and executed).

The Cairo tomb and the Tehran avenue go a long way to illustrate the bitter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

High Praise for VA Health Care...

All It Needs Now Is Sufficient, Timely, Predictable Funding

In quality of care and patient safety, the veterans medical system "points the way toward solving America's health care crisis."

— *Washington Monthly*

DAV

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

www.dav.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relationship between Egypt and Iran—a relationship that has only degenerated further in recent months. And it appears that official Obama administration policy will be to exploit that tension to the fullest. That explains why the president is cozying up to Egypt's authoritarian dictator, Hosni Mubarak—saying nothing at Cairo University about Mubarak's penchant for political repression and torture. Obama clearly appreciates that this Egyptian-Iranian blood feud well serves his struggle to reach peace in the Middle East and stop Iran from becoming a nuclear-armed regional superpower. Democracy and human rights can wait.

Although Egypt and Iran have spent much of the past 30 years hissing at one another from afar, things have taken a recent turn for the worse. One big reason is the chaos in Gaza. After Hamas seized power there in 2007, Egypt sealed its border with the Palestinian territory—and kept it sealed even as Israel's military offensive inflamed the Arab world last winter. Mubarak was wary of potential cross-pollination between Hamas and its allies in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—the officially banned Islamist opposition party that spawned Hamas—possibly leading to terror attacks within his country. The move also pleased Mubarak's financial and political patrons in Washington.

For Iran, this was all further proof that Mubarak is an infidel in the pocket of the United States and the Jews. It enraged Hassan Nasrallah, the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, who accused Mubarak of "taking part in the crime" of Israel's campaign and called for the overthrow of his regime. In Tehran, where hard-line media reportedly have called Mubarak "a Zionist agent," demonstrators called for his hanging.

But Mubarak, who in 28 years of authoritarian rule has learned something about stubbornness, hasn't relented. Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in January, Egypt has maintained an unusually strict (if not totally airtight) security presence along the Gaza border. "They seem to be taking it seriously this time," one Egyptian police officer stationed at the border town of Rafah told the *Los Angeles Times* in February. Fouad Allam, a former chief of Egypt's internal security services, agrees. "Egypt has taken a lot of steps to secure the area. It is safer for Egypt and for Israel," says Allam (a man cognizant enough of the threat posed by the Islamic radicals he once hunted to post two armed guards in business suits outside his home).

Fears of Iranian-backed terrorist infiltration were validated a few months after the Gaza ceasefire. In mid-April, Egypt announced it had arrested 49 members and sympathizers of an alleged Hezbollah cell who were planning terror attacks against Israeli tourists in the Sinai Peninsula, as well as looking to foment a coup in Cairo. A barrage of invective for Hezbollah followed, with one state-controlled Egyptian paper blasting Nasrallah as a "bandit" and a "monkey sheik."

But the real vitriol was reserved for Iran. It's no secret that Hezbollah is an Iranian proxy—Tehran may send Hezbollah $100 million or more per year—and the Egyptians saw its presence on their soil as a grave provocation, further evidence for the widespread Sunni belief that the Shia clerics in Tehran, determined to export their revolution across the Arab world, are meddling in Egyptian affairs. "Iran, and Iran's followers, want Egypt to become a maid of honor for the crowned Iranian queen when she enters the Middle East," Egypt's foreign minister fumed in April. Mubarak himself has been more bellicose, delivering a stemwinder aimed at Tehran soon after the arrests. "We are aware of your plans," he railed. "We will uncover all of your plots and we will respond to your ploys. Stop using the Palestinian issue, and beware the wrath of Egypt."

Iran's loathing of Egypt dates back to the late Shah, entombed in Cairo.

This sort of trash talk should delight the Obama administration, which has inherited from George W. Bush a kind of cold war in the Middle East—one pitting Sunni nations like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan against Iran and its proxies (Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas). Fearing domination and even religious conversion by a nuclear-armed Shia Iran—"the Persians are trying to devour the Arab states," Mubarak warned in December—the Sunnis are keen to assist America's containment of Tehran.

In Egypt's case, that means help with the peace process and Iran. On the former, Mubarak is keeping the squeeze on Hamas at the Gaza border—furthering the U.S. and Israeli goal of proving that Hamas cannot successfully govern on its own—while at the same time working to mediate a deal between Hamas and Fatah in the name of a workable Palestinian government. Mubarak also visited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last month to press the Obama position that a two-state solution is a sine qua non of peace. And, when it comes to Iran, Mubarak is helping the Obama team unify Sunni Arab opposition to Iran's nuclear program and provide political cover for U.S. pressure on the Iranian regime. (Obama's Iran point man, Dennis Ross, was in Cairo last month to strategize with the Egyptian leader.)

All of which helps to explain why Obama, unlike his predecessor, isn't much interested in alienating Mubarak. Obama has cut U.S. funding for democracy promotion in Egypt and will now send that money via the government, rather than directly to independent groups. In Cairo, Obama said nothing about Mubarak's record of repression. Asked about that in March, Hillary Clinton blithely dismissed concerns, saying, "we all have room for improvement." "There is a new attitude here" between the United States and Egypt, says Mohamed Kamal, a Cairo University political science professor and influential member of Mubarak's National Democratic Party. "The two countries are opening a new page."

Perhaps sensing that Egypt's enmity is an obstacle to its ambitions, Iran has made some efforts to woo Egypt into its sphere of influence. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said he wants to open an Iranian embassy in Cairo, and, a few years ago, the Tehran city council changed the name of Islambouli street. But a sign bearing the shooter's name still stands at an entrance to the street, and the giant mural still towers overhead. And, last summer, Cairo was whipped into a new frenzy when Iranian television broadcast *Assassination of a Pharaoh*, a documentary that celebrates Sadat's murder, featuring, among other things, a slow-motion count of the bullets that Islambouli fired into the doomed president's body. In response, Egyptian police raided an Iranian TV station in Cairo, and Egypt cancelled a soccer match between the countries. It doesn't seem like Obama needs to worry that his crucial Arab ally is about to align with Tehran. The Shah certainly isn't going anywhere soon.

Michael Crowley

TARA TODRAS-WHITEHILL/REUTERS/LANDOV

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Repeat the Question

Why health care reform could fail again.

Nothing brings on a headache quite like health care reform. My head has throbbed lately, as Congress has begun to consider a serious overhaul—a debate that forces me to recall the painful last time we embarked on a similar effort some 16 years ago. At the time, I was conducting polls for Bill Clinton and, on the eve of his address to a joint session of Congress in 1993—the prologue to the White House's big push on the issue—I went into the field to gauge the national mood. I returned filled with a great sense of hope about the prospects for reform.

Our failure to enact health care reform was tragic for the country, and it played no small part in my exodus from the Clinton White House. But the coming debate over reform is an opportunity that can't be squandered, and it has prodded me to reconsider this chapter. I've been immersing myself in my old surveys and focus groups and memos to the president. It's even led me to return to the field, posing the same questions to the public, to determine how the mood has shifted and how the forces that oppose reform can best be countered.

Perhaps I should know better than to have sensed any profound changes in the country. And, when I got the results for the new survey, I looked at each question warily, remembering how it all went badly wrong. As I reached the last of the questions, I exclaimed: "Oh no. It can't be. Nothing's changed."

Then and now, the country proclaimed its readiness for bold reform. In both instances, one-quarter say that the health care system "has so many problems that we need to completely rebuild it"; half the country sees "good things" in the current system but believes "some major changes are needed." Then and now, about 60 percent of the public feel dissatisfied with the current health insurance system. Yet three-quarters are satisfied with their own health insurance—once again eerily parallel numbers. The same holds when the public is asked to focus on reform. Yes, we're no longer living in the shadow of Ronald Reagan. But the country has maintained the same anxieties about government's ability to improve the system. The country divides evenly on whether the greater risk is an unchanged status quo or government reforms that "create new problems." And, finally, Obama might want to pay attention to how closely his situation echoes Clinton's. Then and now, more people favor the president's health care plan than oppose it, but the supporters make up less than a majority.

If anything, I found on most of these questions that the desire for change and support for reform was slightly stronger 16 years ago, underscoring the importance of learning some lessons from that history.

ANTHONY RUSSO

When President Clinton delivered his much-heralded primetime address to Congress, during which he held up a health-security card, 48 million Americans tuned in. We fully expected a spike in support for our efforts. Alas, it did not happen. Actually, the number of enthusiastic supporters dropped, while one-third of the country remained opposed. We took that response seriously, but it did not stop us in our tracks. It should have.

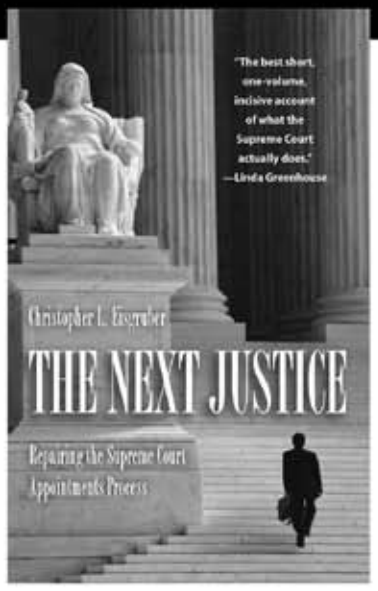
The health-security card tipped our strategic calculus. We wanted to spotlight the notion of "security"—as Clinton put it, "giving every American health security, health care that can never be taken away." With the recession of 1991 fresh in everyone's mind, our polling showed that "knowing I will be covered" was the sentiment that generated intense emotional support and best withstood attacks.

We knew cost was the voter's biggest worry, as it is now, but the plan championed by the White House made it very difficult for us to win an argument on cost. Having just passed a budget with dramatic tax increases, Clinton could not propose a new round of taxes for health care, yet our polls showed that half the country (quite understandably) thought reform would require new taxes. They just thought we would find a backdoor way to raise them. Meanwhile, our main tool for restraining health care costs was the introduction of "managed competition" and regional "health alliances," something barely understood at the time and, to the extent that it was understood, deeply unpopular. The other tools were premium caps and a national health care budget, barred from rising above inflation and population growth, but those devices merely served to underscore government's large and complex role.

When confronted with these questions of cost, the political advisers in the White House would mumble, look down at our shoes, or defer to the technocrats. But President Clinton didn't have that option.

The Supreme Court appointments process is broken.

This is how to fix it.


"The best short, one-volume, incisive account of what the Supreme Court actually does."
—Linda Greenhouse
Christopher L. Eisgruber
THE NEXT JUSTICE
Repairing the Supreme Court Appointments Process

The Next Justice

Repairing the Supreme Court Appointments Process

Christopher L. Eisgruber

"The best short, one-volume, incisive account of what the Supreme Court actually does."
—LINDA GREENHOUSE

"The appointment process could gain a lot from Mr. Eisgruber's proposal."
—DANIEL SULLIVAN, *NEW YORK SUN*

"[A] concise and lucid case for a more thoughtful and workable process."
—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

Paper $16.95

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

press.princeton.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He claimed to be reforming the system precisely because of the impact of costs on businesses and entitlements spending. Our inability to talk credibly about how we would reduce health care spending or costs for individuals and the country built a contradiction into all our efforts—the more we talked about the comprehensiveness of our plans, the more voters worried this would yield higher premiums or higher taxes. Very quickly, voters came to conclude that their families would face higher costs.

And those dynamics are still in play. In my recent polling, I found that voters are skeptical about claims that reform will reduce costs and personal health outlays. Claims about simplicity, information-technology modernization, and best practices don't seem to be enough to persuade them otherwise.

But these misgivings can be trumped. Then and now, the biggest hope for health care reform is "reducing health care premiums and costs for the average family," while the goal of "guaranteeing that no one will lose coverage if they move, get sick or lose their job" is not far behind. And, at the end of the survey, after hearing all the arguments and attacks, it is the prospect of insurance for all that people recall most, not arguments about reduced costs or increased affordability.

The health-security argument lost force during the earlier battle as unemployment dropped steadily, but the opposite is happening now. Almost 40 percent indicate that they or a member of their immediate family has been unemployed in the last year, and these are the voters among the most supportive of Obama's plan.

Still, you cannot expand support for reform unless you can convincingly talk about how you will reduce costs. Even though President Clinton declared that "we come together to write a new chapter in the American story," people responded personally, working to figure

The Health Care Lobbies: A Field Guide

Insurers

The big national insurers that cater to large businesses can survive, and even thrive, in a reformed health care system. What regulation will cost them in profits, they can make up in volume. But those insurers that focus on individuals and small businesses could be in trouble, since they make most of their money by picking and choosing the healthiest enrollees. Reform would prohibit their basic business practices. Meanwhile, both groups are dead set against a public insurance option. Is there a way to finesse these concerns—and bring the insurers on board? Or should reformers tell them to stick it? It all comes down to the votes. One discouraging sign for the insurers: Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson has indicated he won't filibuster a public plan. Maybe those donations to his campaign weren't so well spent after all.

Employers

Reform would give employers more predictability—and, over time, it should at least soften the blow of health care costs. But the big employers are loath to give up control over what their employees get. And small employers fear they'll be required to pay for benefits, without sufficient subsidies or exemptions. These differences can be negotiated, but not easily. A lot will depend on the willingness of progressive-minded CEOs to break with their colleagues and step out in front of the reform effort. Watch for names like Steve Burd of Safeway, Carl Camden of Kelly Services, Howard Schultz of Starbucks. And don't be surprised if somebody from Wal-Mart has something to say, too. Lately even the bête noire of liberals has been feeling the squeeze of rising health care costs.

Physicians

Historically, the most entrenched and effective opponents of reform, the medical community has splintered—and evolved—in the last few decades. Generalists tend to be more liberal, specialists more conservative. But managed care convinced virtually all doctors that private-sector bureaucracies can be as frustrating as public-sector ones. They're also desperate for malpractice reform and a permanent adjustment of Medicare reimbursements, so that fees don't automatically ratchet down every year. Progressives could be perfectly happy with either move; among other things, they could tie malpractice reform to compliance with quality guidelines, giving them a win-win scenario.

Hospitals

Along with the insurers who work the individual and small business markets, hospitals are proving to be the most obstreperous special interest. A serious focus on reducing the cost of medical care would require some serious changes in the way hospitals do business. It's not coincidental that, after the White House summit in May, the American Hospital Association was the organization that started hastily backpedaling. And the same hospital executives who are complaining to their trade group also know how to reach their congressmen.

Drugmakers

Profit margins for the drug industry will likely go down with reform; that much seems certain. Maybe the government will start wielding more bargaining power. Or maybe it will start making clear which drugs add real value—and which ones just generate profits. Still, Pharma can look for a silver lining. With the pipeline for breakthrough drugs drying up, the prospect of millions of extra customers offers the appeal of financial stability. Besides, the manufacturers learned from the Medicare drug benefit that they can make money on government programs, assuming they have friends in Washington designing the program. So they're not trying to blow up reform—yet. If enactment seems likely, they'll focus their energy on trying to make sure it's not too unfriendly.

Unions

Labor is united behind reform and has already put its boots on the ground. If reform passes, it will be in no small part because of union advocacy. But, within the house of labor, unity breaks down over details. Public-employee and industrial unions don't like the idea of curbing the tax break on health plans, since their members—older, and beneficiaries of generous contracts over the years—have relatively expensive plans. But the Service Employees International Union, which has practically branded the health issue as its own, will do just about anything to get universal coverage—even if it means alienating some union brothers and sisters in the process.

David Cowles

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out what it all meant for them—the impact on their family, access to their doctors, dollars and cents, and on everything they'd done to become satisfied with their health care. Judging whether the plan would help or hurt one's family suddenly became the dominant predictor in our computer modeling of support for or opposition to the Clinton health care plan. The plan that took Ira Magaziner three days to explain to the political advisers and that George Stephanopoulos described to me as a Rube Goldberg monstrosity was unpacked by real people—months before the special interests and politicians would get to caricature it. In the end, they didn't have to. People will soon engage in the same personal calculus about Obama's plan.

One of the reasons the Clinton health care plan failed was the resistance of key groups. Seniors couldn't see what was in it for them, even though the president reassured them Medicare would be protected, buttressed by a new prescription-drug benefit. They believed that this vast new commitment to health care spending would erode support for their own care.

It may surprise you that Obama has already lost seniors, according to our current survey—only one-third approve of his plan. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see there isn't much in it for them. There is already talk of carving out major savings from Medicare and, unlike during Clinton's battle, no offer of a new drug benefit. Clearly, they need to see health care gains for themselves too.

One would have expected union households to be among the most enthusiastic supporters of Clinton's health reforms, but they held back. Resentment over NAFTA played a part, for sure. But the reforms also had uncertain benefits for their members, most of whom already had health care—many with the kind of "Cadillac" plans that Clinton's team speculated about taxing. In the end, unions never seriously mobilized their members or financed advertising to defend reform.

Today, the unions are battered and divided and deeply affected by the changes in health care and employment that are propelling the country toward reform. With few illusions about the old system, union households are strong supporters of Obama's proposal. Yet the members will ultimately judge whether the plan is good for their families—and I'm certain that all the talk about taxing insurance contributions has not gone unnoticed.

Ross Perot's bloc of rebellious voters was contemptuous of elites and big government spending and would ultimately turn against the Democratic Congress and Clinton. Improbably, a majority of them initially supported the Clinton plan. But, when they got a good look at its complexity and bureaucracy, they were lost.

President Obama and the Democrats regained power in the last two elections because trust in government again fell to the historic lows reached in 1992. And, while voters have great confidence in Obama and his administration, they are worried about the deficits and spending and the government bailouts of the irresponsible. So, while voters want to see a rebalancing away from greed and toward the public good, almost half the citizenry is worried the government may get it wrong.

Ross Perot is a distant memory, but his more libertarian, blue-collar male voters are very much alive. They are pretty certain government will mess this up—and only about 30 percent support Obama's health care plan right now. With Republicans reciting their mantra about no "government takeover" of health care, the plan's opponents have found a common text.

There's one final number that I have to highlight—the three-quarters that say they are "satisfied" with their own insurance. Most are not at all satisfied with a system that has forced them to trade higher wages for continued health insurance coverage and other compromises. But those personal compromises to get satisfactory coverage will mean people can live a little longer with the status quo and want to make sure the proposed changes really will make things better for their families.

At the moment, the country is tilting toward enacting Obama's reforms, and it will do so more enthusiastically if Obama learns from the Clinton experience and rises to the educative role that he relishes. He must respect the thoughts, feelings and calculations of ordinary citizens who are not easily spun on important issues. People will take out their calculators when he lays out his plan, and he can't avoid speaking candidly about its costs and consequences. And he can't forget that he has a big story to tell about a changed America, one in which health care is but a pile of bricks in the new foundation he is laying.

Stanley B. Greenberg

Stanley B. Greenberg is the author of Dispatches from the War Room: In the Trenches with Five Extraordinary Leaders.

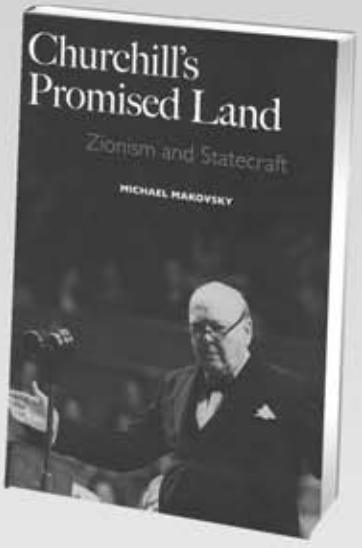
A New Republic Book

CHURCHILL'S PROMISED LAND

Zionism and Statecraft

Michael Makovsky

Now in paperback



Winner of the 2007 National Jewish Book Award in the History category, awarded by the Jewish Book Council

"Arresting, thoroughly documented, and at times startling, this will be the standard book on Churchill's complex political and intellectual response to the Zionist project."
—Fouad Ajami

"A rigorous and balanced study that puts Churchill's Zionism in perspective. More books will certainly be written about Churchill and the Jews, but probably not better ones."
—Philip H. Gordon, *Foreign Affairs*

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Politics and the Arts

Yale University Press
yalebooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sotto Voce

The Sonia Sotomayor you don't know.

JEFFREY ROSEN

A TIP FROM an informant led Detective Amando Rodriguez and Sergeant Diane Contreras to the stash house—actually a New York City apartment—which they had good reason to think contained a substantial haul of drugs. The suspicion was confirmed when they busted a man leaving the building with a kilo of cocaine in a black bag. The officers entered the building to stake out the apartment. That's when the carry-out delivery woman arrived with an order for the stash house. Worried that she might inadvertently draw attention to their presence, the cops made a hasty decision to enlist her help. The officers told her to knock on the door and announce the arrival of food. When the door swung open, the cops ordered all six inhabitants into the hallway and then searched the apartment. There they found five kilos of coke and $15,000.

There was one problem with the bust: The cops didn't have a warrant. So a district court judge ruled that the police had violated the Fourth Amendment; the drugs and cash weren't admissible evidence. The case didn't end there, however. It went to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit—a panel that included Judge Sonia Sotomayor. She was far less sympathetic to the police than the district court, but her colleagues were not and they carried the day. "[B]y answering the door to receive their food delivery," the majority ruled in *U.S.* v. *Gori* (2000), the stash house occupants "had no reasonable expectation of privacy."

Many reviews of Sotomayor's appellate opinions have found them dry and technocratic. "[T]hey reveal no larger vision, seldom appeal to history and consistently avoid quotable language. Judge Sotomayor's decisions are, instead, almost always technical, incremental, and exhaustive," wrote Adam Liptak in *The New York Times*. After an initial reading of her majority opinions, I came to a similar conclusion.

But Sotomayor's dissenting opinion in the *Gori* case doesn't fit this characterization at all. It is filled with blistering language. She called the majority's holding "unprecedented" and "extraordinary." Ridiculing the majority's characterization of the officers' behavior as a polite request to step outside for the purpose of a "limited investigation," she chastised her colleagues for failing to recognize the "obvious element of coercion" that reasonable people would feel in being confronted in their homes by officers pointing guns at them through an open door. And Sotomayor was persuasive on the substance as well. In 2004, in an opinion written by Judge Richard Posner and joined by one of Obama's Supreme Court runners-up, Diane Wood, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit agreed with Sotomayor's dissenting position that allowing the cops to seize anything they see through a door that opens in response to their knock would undermine the constitutional protections for the home.

If Sotomayor's majority opinions are often hard to distinguish from those of her fellow appellate judges, perhaps that's not surprising in a genre so heavily constrained by legal precedents. It's often in dissents that appellate judges can express their true selves—their passions, judicial philosophies, and unique views of the law. And Sotomayor's little-noticed dissents are clearly the opinions in which she has the greatest personal investment. Unlike her majority opinions, her dissents sometimes show flashes of civil-libertarian passion or indignation, even as they remain closely grounded in facts and precedents. Most important, they are substantively bold, staking out unequivocal liberal positions—from a broad reading of the Americans with Disabilities Act to sympathy for the due-process rights of a mentally ill defendant.

Sotomayor, who published 226 majority opinions on the merits during her more than ten years on the appellate court, published only 21 dissents—a rate slightly below average for appellate judges. Although not always ideologically predictable, they are far more liberal than her majority opinions: According to Stefanie A. Lindquist of the University of Texas, Austin, 63 percent of her dissents can be characterized as liberal, as opposed to 38 percent of her majority opinions. (Only five of the 21 dissents are clearly conservative.) It's in these dissents that a different view of Sotomayor emerges: a judge who can be both crusading and open-minded.

IN A SPEECH in Puerto Rico in 1994, the same one in which she first said she hoped that a "wise woman" would reach a "better conclusion" than a male judge, Sotomayor also said, "I have struggled with defining my judicial philosophy." No single school of thought, she said, fit comfortably. "I do not believe that I have failed in my endeavor because I do not have opinions or approaches but only because I am not sure whether those opinions and approaches merit my continuing them." Fifteen years later, Sotomayor still hasn't settled into a consistent judicial philosophy, which can either be viewed as a lack of constitutional vision or a sign of pragmatism. It certainly can make her majority opinions hard to predict.

Her dissents, too, are methodologically as well as ideologically eclectic: She samples from different judicial philosophies in different cases. Sometimes Sotomayor sounds like a textualist in the Scalia style, and sometimes she sounds as enthusiastic as Justices Ginsburg and Breyer in her devotion to international law and the living constitution. And what makes her dissents so interesting is that sometimes, she'll use Scalia-like methods to achieve results that Scalia would embrace, but that in other instances would cause his head to explode.

Despite this eclecticism, Sotomayor can display genuine moral and intellectual commitments—and on issues that don't currently have any passionate champions on the court. Her most impressive dissents reveal her to be a true civil libertarian—most famously in two cases where her colleagues upheld strip searches in a school and a prison. Fourth Amendment law is often based on abstractions rather than gritty reality. But, in both of these cases, Sotomayor insisted on describing the searches from the perspective of the people who experience them. This is a refreshingly candid approach that captures the nasty reality of the ordeals. In one case, *N.G. and*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

S.G. v. *Connecticut* (2004), Sotomayor wrote, "The officials inspected the girls' naked bodies front and back, and had them lift their breasts and spread out folds of fat." If it weren't obvious from that description, she concluded, "The young girls described the process as embarrassing and humiliating."

Perhaps her most inspiring dissent can be found in *Pappas* v. *Giuliani* (2002), which turned on First Amendment questions. The majority decision allowed the New York Police Department to fire an officer for mailing anonymous racist and anti-Semitic fliers to a charitable group that had solicited him for contributions. Pointing out that the police department itself had made the scandal public by identifying Pappas and disclosing his racist speech to the press, Sotomayor's dissent concluded that "it is not empty rhetoric when Pappas argues that he was terminated because of his opinions"—a result Sotomayor properly argued that the First Amendment forbids. "To be sure, I find the speech in this case patently offensive, hateful, and insulting," Sotomayor wrote. "The Court should not, however, gloss over three decades of jurisprudence and the centrality of First Amendment freedoms in our lives because it is confronted with speech it does not like and because a government employer fears a potential public response that it alone precipitated."

Sotomayor is hardly a First Amendment absolutist: As the Boston civil liberties lawyer and columnist Harvey Silverglate has pointed out, she joined a 2008 opinion which allowed school administrators to retaliate against a student who criticized them as "douchebags" on a blog because the student thought they canceled a band competition. And, like most liberal appellate judges, Sotomayor is perfectly willing to uphold criminal convictions in most cases, as Supreme Court precedent requires. Lindquist estimates that, of Sotomayor's 67 majority opinions involving criminal matters, 81 percent are pro-government and only 18 percent are pro-defendant. (By contrast, in civil rights cases, Sotomayor's majority opinions are about 52 percent liberal and 48 percent conservative.)

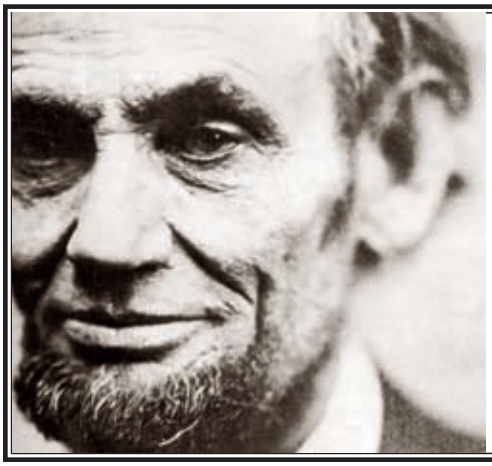
Still, the pattern is clear enough: Sotomayor will likely move the Supreme Court marginally to the left on civil liberties issues. Sotomayor's predecessor, David Souter, was a far more liberal and activist justice than is commonly acknowledged. According to *Measuring Judicial Activism*, a new book that Lindquist has co-written with her University of Texas colleague Frank Cross, Souter can be objectively described as a judicial activist. "Souter was much more likely to strike down a conservative statute than he was to strike down a liberal statute, and that makes him more ideologically activist," Cross told me. (Among the current justices, only Clarence Thomas scores higher on their cumulative activism index.)

But Souter was less consistently liberal in criminal cases involving searches and seizures. He wrote a famously conservative 2001 decision holding that the police could arrest a woman for driving without a seatbelt. A comprehensive survey of Souter's Fourth Amendment decisions by Scott P. Johnson of Frostburg State University characterized Souter as a "moderately liberal" swing vote in search and seizure cases: From 1991 to 1997, he voted 62 percent in the conservative direction; then, in a dramatic shift during his last decade on the Court, voted 61 percent for the liberal position. Sotomayor's Fourth Amendment dissents suggest that she will be a more consistent search-and-seizure civil libertarian than Souter.

Economics is the other area where Sotomayor might push the court a bit to the left. On the Roberts Court, both the liberal and conservative justices have been remarkably pro-business: Consider the 46 cases business cases before the Roberts Court in which the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has participated—the cases of greatest interest to the business community. If you leave out the environment, labor, and employment cases, which are more ideologically divided, most of these cases go the Chamber's way, in areas ranging from punitive damage to securities fraud to antitrust, and most of them are decided by broad bipartisan majorities of 7–2 or higher. This reflects the fact that all nine justices on the Roberts Court share, to varying degrees, a suspicion of "regulation by litigation." David Souter very much shared this orientation: He wrote a series of important pro-business majority opinions, including the 5–3 Exxon case last term, in which he reduced a $2.5 billion punitive-damage award, the largest in history.

Early reviews of Sotomayor's business decisions by *The Kiplinger Letter*, *BusinessWeek* and *The New York Times* have concluded that they are hard to characterize. "Her record is mixed, and though she may not be a business's dream, she's likely to be more sympathetic than some of Obama's other possible picks," wrote *The Kiplinger Letter*. "[M]any lawyers and scholars who have examined her record closely say that her opinions in [150 business cases] are unpredictable, and do not put her clearly in a pro-or-anti-business camp," wrote John Schwartz in *The New York Times*.

But, in some of Sotomayor's business cases, she shows the same willingness to stake out bold liberal positions that characterize her dissents. According to Lindquist, two of her three opinions



THE NEW REPUBLIC /// SPECIAL ISSUE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL

Cover Date: July 15 • On Sale: June 29

The Books and Arts section in *The New Republic*'s July 15th issue will be entirely dedicated to a 25,000-word essay called "Who Lincoln Was" by Sean Wilentz, which paints a fresh portrait of Abraham Lincoln based on a critical review of all the significant books of this centennial year.

Sean Wilentz is one of the great American historians of our day. In this extraordinary essay, he casts new light on the images, interpretations, portraits, and myths (including President Obama's) that characterize the contemporary discussion of Lincoln.

For advertising opportunities please contact Lauren Sims at lsims@TNR.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that were reversed by the Supreme Court have been business cases—where her rulings inspired the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to file briefs urging their overturning.

For the business community, a revealing aspect of Sotomayor's record should be her willingness to certify class-action lawsuits against corporate defendants. In the *Visa Check* case (2001), an antitrust suit against various credit-card associations, she devised a loose standard for allowing class actions to be certified. She included language suggesting that she was not concerned about the practical effects of the suits on business. "Given these conclusions regarding the soundness of the class," she wrote, "the dissent's comments about the possibility that certification will coerce defendants into settlement are largely inapposite. The effect of certification on parties' leverage in settlement negotiations is a fact of life for class action litigants."

Sotomayor can't be considered a pro-class-action ideologue: She later joined an opinion overturning her own ruling in the *Visa Check* case and in the *Painewebber* (2002) case, she de-certified an important class-action suit. Broadly, though, Sotomayor seems willing to test the boundaries of the court's current consensus on some of these issues. Indeed, in one of her decisions certifying a class action, *Dabit* v. *Merrill Lynch* (2005), she again ruled against the Chamber of Commerce's position, construing the federal securities laws in a way that might have opened the floodgates to similar suits. The decision was unanimously reversed by the Supreme Court in an opinion that included a tart rebuke from John Paul Stevens. The type of suits that Sotomayor would have allowed, Stevens reiterated, "presents a danger of vexatiousness different in degree and in kind from that which accompanies litigation in general."

On the whole, these decisions suggest that, although not an economic populist, she may be less suspicious of "regulation by litigation" than Souter or any of the other justices on the Roberts Court. This may strike fear into the heart of the business community, but, for those who value ideological diversity on the Court, that's not a bad thing.

Of course, Sotomayor's more liberal positions on civil liberties and business issues will generate the charge that she is a judicial activist. But this charge is hard to sustain. In their new book, Lindquist and Cross have created five different categories to measure the extent of a judge's activism: overruling federal statutes, overruling state statutes, overruling executive action, reversing prior precedents, and allowing more access to the courts. Applying these criteria to Sotomayor, Lindquist found her appellate opinions to be not especially activist. Sotomayor reversed the lower court or agency in 47 percent of her majority opinions, which is a little higher than the appellate court average of 40 percent, but not dramatically so. In eight cases where she evaluated the constitutionality of law, there was only one where she struck the law down.

Sotomayor's decisions show a methodological eclecticism that sometimes leads her to the kind of textualism championed by none other than Antonin Scalia. Although this doesn't always lead to judicial restraint, it can lead to ideological unpredictability. In perhaps her most significant conservative dissent, Sotomayor refused to join a 2000 decision that held that the relatives of the 213 victims who died on TWA flight 800 could recover damages for the plane crash, which occurred soon after takeoff from John F. Kennedy Airport. While expressing sympathy for the relatives, Sotomayor concluded that their claims were barred by the plain text of a federal law, the Death on the High Seas Act, which she insisted applies to "*all* deaths occurring beyond a marine league [three nautical miles] from the shore of any State." (Her colleagues responded that Sotomayor was ignoring the Supreme Court's definition of "high seas" when the law was enacted.) The decision shows that Sotomayor is willing to let her commitment to textualism trump her instinctive empathy for sympathetic victims.

But Sotomayor's textualism has also led her to liberal results. In *Hayden* v. *Pataki* (2006), a majority of the full appeals court held (convincingly, in my view) that a New York law which denies the vote to currently incarcerated felons didn't violate the federal Voting Rights Act. Chastising her colleagues for relying on legislative history, Sotomayor's dissent sounded like a liberal Scalia. "It is plain to anyone reading the Voting Rights Act that it applies to all 'voting qualifications,'" she declared. "The duty of a judge is to follow the law, not to question its plain terms."

Sotomayor's textualism, although principled, might also be criticized (like Scalia's) as simplistic. But the picture is complicated by the fact that Sotomayor is hardly a consistent textualist—at times, she employs judicial methodologies that Scalia abhors. In a 2000 case, *Croll* v. *Croll*, she dissented from her colleagues' conclusion that a U.S. court lacked jurisdiction to order a child to returned to her father in Hong Kong. Sotomayor concluded that her mother had arguably violated the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction by taking the child from Hong Kong without the father's consent and justified her stance by quoting broad readings of the Hague Convention by courts in Australia, England, and Israel. A decision like this will raise the hackles of conservatives who are suspicious of any and all invocations of international law.

In my view, her most convincing dissents involve not conservative textualism or liberal empathy, but an empirically grounded pragmatism that challenges the majority's premises on its own terms. In 2008, for example, she partially dissented from a decision allowing a district judge to increase the sentence of a defendant convicted for transporting firearms. In a dissent sprinkled with citations to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and publications like *The Atlantic*, Sotomayor questioned the decision's main premises: that gun violence is more serious in densely populated areas and requires greater deterrence in areas with restrictive gun laws, which create a black market for guns.

Even if Sotomayor may not turn out to be a master of internal court politics in the style of Obama's judicial hero, Earl Warren, her dissenting opinions suggest that she could play a different but still useful role: a strong voice for civil liberties, and economic and social justice—sometimes in the majority, sometimes in dissent. The fact that the Roberts Court currently has no liberal justice who consistently plays this role is all the more reason to welcome the addition of her voice. As Frank Cross puts it: "She may not have been my first choice, but she's a good choice. Her dissenting opinions look liberal but not knee-jerk, and she goes against the grain sometimes; she issued a few significant conservative decisions." And the politics of her appointment are so overwhelming that they're difficult to resist. For these reasons, conservatives will have a hard time attacking her as judicial ideologue, and Democrats can vote for her with hope and expectation. ◆

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT CAN THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED PHARMACY DELIVER? A SMARTER WAY TO USE TECHNOLOGY.

The time it takes a child to grow up and get a driver's license is nearly the time it takes for a medical learning to be commonly practiced. At Medco, we think the best way to go from zero to practice faster is to drive innovation. So we're already wired, allowing us to get better quality and more value out of healthcare.

WIRED COULD SAVE BILLIONS, AND SOMETHING EVEN MORE VALUABLE.

The total direct and indirect costs from medication related problems in the U.S. come to $177 billion a year. Medco's wired platform and sophisticated research methods allow us to detect and analyze drug interactions that could be harmful, even lethal to patients. That's how we learned that people who take certain heartburn medications, known as proton pump inhibitors, combined with the anti-clotting drug clopidogrel, known by its brand name **Plavix**,® can have a higher chance of heart attack or other serious heart disease complications than when Plavix is not taken in combination with proton pump inhibitors. In May of this year, the FDA approved a labeling change for Plavix that discourages its simultaneous use with certain proton pump inhibitors. With this information in hand, Medco works together with patients and their physicians to determine the right course of action.

99.9997%

Our automated fulfillment pharmacies dispense prescriptions at 99.9997% accuracy.

PRECISION PHARMACY IS HERE. NOW.

And it's working. Providing over 60 million people with real-time safety checks and information so they and their physicians can make more informed decisions. Through our online tool, **My Rx Choices**,® we're able to offer access to cost-effective alternatives that could help save members an average $240 a year. So to those looking to drive meaningful healthcare reform that delivers sustainable savings, Medco believes it's not about spending more, but spending smarter. Because smarter simply makes healthcare better. Join the conversation at makingmedicinesmarter.org

Medco and **My Rx Choices** are registered trademarks and **Medco Making Medicine Smarter** is a trademark of Medco Health Solutions, Inc. **Plavix** is a registered trademark of Bristol-Myers Squibb/Sanofi Pharmaceuticals Partnership. © 2009 Medco Health Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved.

medco®
MAKING MEDICINE SMARTER.™

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Colin Johnson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Operator

Why is the most powerful health care lobbyist playing nice?

JONATHAN COHN

THE FIRST TIME I remember speaking with Karen Ignagni was via a TV satellite, for a debate about health care policy on CNN. It was the summer of 2007, not long after the debut of Michael Moore's *Sicko*, and each of us was playing our usual role. Ignagni is the telegenic president of America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) and arguably Washington's most influential health-industry lobbyist. She was on the show to explain why her members' business practices weren't nearly as awful as the Michael Moore film suggested, and to assure Americans that AHIP would work to make coverage more affordable and accessible. My role, as the author of a new book critical of the insurance industry, was to remind viewers that Ignagni was full of it—that the insurance industry really did do everything it could to avoid covering sick people and to thwart efforts at reform. This was, after all, the same industry that gave us all "Harry and Louise." The discussion got a bit heated, as these things go; I basically accused Ignagni of lying when she said she wanted everybody to have access to insurance; and, by the end, Ignagni was (according to the cameraman) complaining that I'd landed a few low blows.

The second time I spoke with Ignagni was in person, at AHIP's Washington offices, earlier this year. This time, we were sitting just a few feet from each other, at a long conference table overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue. Ignagni appeared exactly as I'd seen her on television—thin with short, light-colored hair. But this time her own communications people had been reaching out to me; and this time, her statements weren't nearly so predictable. When I asked my first question, Ignagni asked—very politely—if she could put off answering in order to provide me with some important background about AHIP's changing position on health reform. "People sent a strong message to us, that we needed to do more with respect to market rules and performance," Ignagni went on, "that came through loudly and clearly." And she said people were particularly concerned about having to pay disproportionate rates for having pre-existing medical conditions.

I was dubious. Would AHIP and its members give coverage to anybody willing to pay for it? "Yup." Would they provide "community rating," meaning everybody buying the same policy would pay the same price? "Yes." What about letting the government define a basic, minimum benefits package that all policies would have to include? "We're for that." And what about letting the government practice some kind of risk equalization—in effect, taking money away from insurers that cover mostly healthy beneficiaries and giving it to those that attract disproportionate numbers of unhealthy ones? "Yes, the Europeans do this. . . . We think it has a great deal of merit."

Of course, her answers left out a lot of key details. She'd let the government define a set of minimum benefits, but would the benefits be sufficiently generous? Community rating usually includes some exceptions for smoking, geography, and sometimes age; what kinds of exceptions would she allow—and how much power to discriminate among customers would she want to preserve? People had told me that Ignagni was a master communicator: When challenged, they said, she deflected so delicately you didn't even notice that she was disagreeing. This turned out to be true. When I asked her about a proposed public insurance plan, into which people could enroll voluntarily, she spent several minutes charitably describing underlying motivations before reaffirming, gently, her opposition.

Still, something had changed. A few years ago, even these hedged policy commitments would have been largely unthinkable. Now, Ignagni and AHIP are doing more than just talking the talk. For the last two years, AHIP has been participating in ongoing, confidential discussions among health care interest groups representing everybody from the medical industry to consumer advocates. Convened in some cases by members of Congress, in other cases by the groups themselves, these discussions have brought together longtime adversaries to find common ground on reform. It was some of these discussions (organized, according to sources, by AHIP and the Service Employees International Union) that led to the meeting of industry groups, including AHIP, at the White House in May—and to the signing of a letter, in which the groups pledged to help the president reduce the cost of medicine.

Earlier this month, *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman offered some advice to Democrats: "Don't trust the insurance industry." Like most longtime supporters of health care reform, that has been my position as well. But the things Ignagni is saying publicly—and the things her group is doing privately—are enough to make even this hardened skeptic wonder: Can we trust the insurance industry? Or, at least, can we work with it? To answer "yes" you don't have to believe that the industry has grown a conscience—merely that its self-interest has changed. And there's reason to think that it has.

LIKE MOST OF THE LOBBYISTS playing a key role in the health care debate this year, Ignagni is a veteran of the last serious debate over reform, in 1993 and 1994. But, when that fight began, she was on what most reasonable observers would call "the other side." She had entered the world of advocacy via the Committee for National Health Insurance (established by Walter Reuther in 1969 through the United Auto Workers union) and then the AFL-CIO, where she worked for over a decade. In those positions, she earned a reputation for protecting labor's interests with ferocity: In the 1992 election, she panned President George H.W. Bush's reform proposal as "incremental"; a year later, she cautioned advisers of President Clinton against timidity. As David Broder and Haynes Johnson recount in their book, *The System*, at one meeting, Ignagni warned that their reforms did not go far enough, because private insurers would continue "gaming the system."

Ignagni's move to the insurance industry was not, at the time, as drastic as it sounds now. Her first step, in late 1993, was to join the Group Health Association, made up of independent managed-care organizations. Many of them were nonprofit group practices, with deep roots in their communities, that looked favorably upon Clinton's proposals. This was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a rather stark contrast to the rest of the industry, which viewed Clintoncare with ambivalence at best, and outright hostility at worst. That was particularly true of the insurance carriers who catered to individuals and small businesses—carriers that tend to make their profits by weeding out sick people. Clinton's plan, like any sensible reform, would have eliminated many of their practices. It was their trade group that conceived of and financed "Harry and Louise."

But, after the Clinton plan died, the interests of the insurance industry began to converge. The trade group representing large commercial insurers merged with Ignagni's, forming the Association of American Health Plans (AAHP) and keeping Ignagni as president. Its members soon found themselves the subject of a consumer backlash against managed care—and the object of threats, by feisty Democrats, to regulate the HMOs.

Ignagni would become the industry's most capable defender, making common cause with the Republican congressional leadership. But, unlike Newt Gingrich and his revolutionaries, she didn't focus exclusively on the evils of regulation or the virtues of the market. Instead, she stressed the good things her industry was already doing—and its ability to do even more, all while policing itself. She also appeared to be infinitely reasonable. "If we want to influence the discussion in Congress," she said at one point, "we can't oppose everything." In the end, though, Ignagni's was a tactical retreat, and one that produced total victory. Democrats never did pass managed-care reform, and more than one frustrated reformer came to see Ignagni as a big reason why. Said one congressional Democrat to *The New York Times*: "Karen went from God's right hand to Satan's left hand."

In the ensuing years, after AAHP merged with another trade group to form AHIP, Ignagni would deliver for her industry again—most famously during the Bush-era fight over making prescription drugs more affordable for senior citizens on Medicare. Once again, the insurance industry was in the crosshairs: Many Democrats wanted to provide a drug benefit directly through the government. Working closely with Republican lawmakers, whose campaigns the industry helped finance, AHIP fought the government-run plan and won. The result was a drug benefit that not only operated exclusively through private insurance companies but sweetened the pot with extra subsidies. It's one reason Uwe Reinhardt, an economist at Princeton, recently quipped that "whatever AHIP pays her"—last year, more than $1.5 million in salary and bonuses—"it's not enough."

But times have changed for the insurance industry. The commercial insurers who dominate make most of their money by working with large companies that cover their workers. And that business is slowly falling off, because fewer employers are willing or able to pay the premiums as health care costs skyrocket. Back in the 1990s, insurers could be ambivalent about reform, in part because they felt they had the power to control costs on their own, by turning to managed care. But they've done that now and, after a short respite, costs are going up again. A government intervention—one that restrained cost increases and, no less important, compelled millions to buy private insurance—would provide these insurers with a more predictable and stable stream of business.

Of course, old ideological habits die hard. As recently as the 2008 presidential campaign, AHIP's official reform proposal consisted of modest, incremental steps—stopping well short of the wholesale reorganizations that would make coverage available to everybody. AHIP's solution to the glaring problem of people with pre-existing conditions, who can't buy coverage on their own, was to create special "high-risk" pools, subsidized by the states and run by private carriers. Although these programs have failed in most of the states where they've been tried, AHIP called them "guaranteed-access plans"—the exact same name John McCain used for a similar feature in his campaign proposal.

But, even before the campaign, Ignagni herself—who, according to sources familiar with AHIP's internal dynamics, commands unusual loyalty among her members—had been laying the groundwork for a more reform-friendly position. After the election, AHIP greeted Obama's victory with a congratulatory note, betraying nary a trace of skepticism: "Now is the time for health care reform. . . . We support coverage for all Americans, coverage they can afford, and coverage they can keep." A few days later, when Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus released his own framework for reform, the group was similarly effusive. AHIP followed up with a comprehensive reform plan of its own, featuring guaranteed insurance even for people with pre-existing conditions, more government spending on safety-net programs, and an individual mandate—in other words, a plan broadly similar to what leading Democrats were proposing.

Can Barack Obama trust Karen Ignagni, the insurance industry's woman in Washington?

SCOTT J. FERRELL/CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Behind the scenes, Ignagni was sending similar signals. A key moment came in February, when Obama was about to release his rough budget outline. Everybody knew Obama would propose reducing the government's payments to private insurers participating in Medicare, then using that money to help pay for universal coverage; everybody knew that the insurers would resist, since the plan would be taking money out of their pockets. But administration officials were in close touch with Ignagni before the release. And, when the proposal came out, AHIP was remarkably sanguine: Its official press release spent two paragraphs praising Obama's interest in reform, before mentioning the proposed cuts. And, while AHIP registered its disapproval, Ignagni herself kept a relatively low profile that day—something that at least some officials in the White House took as a show of good faith, according to an administration official working on health policy.

Ignagni's restraint on the Medicare cuts is consistent with AHIP's push for cost control—positions that have pitted it against other industry trade groups. AHIP has enthusiastically endorsed proposals for "comparative-effectiveness studies"—that is, for creating a quasi-independent government entity that would determine which treatments work best. Most reform-minded politicians and health policy experts believe that such an institution is the best way to reduce health care spending without making it harder for people to get care or diminishing its quality. This position puts AHIP at odds with the drug and device industries, which fear—correctly—that such an institution might cut into their profits. AHIP also supports government-led changes in reimbursement of doctors and hospitals—such as, for example, pegging Medicare payment levels to outcomes—in the hopes of reducing spending further. Not surprisingly, doctors and hospitals frequently take a dimmer view of these proposals.

Those tensions spilled into public view days after the big White House meeting on industry measures to cut costs, which Ignagni attended. The president of the American Hospital Association, reacting to a backlash from his members, hastily let it be known that his group hadn't really agreed to concrete cost reduction targets. Ignagni, conspicuously, stood pat. AHIP's cooperation with reform has also aroused the ire of at least one prominent Republican strategist. In May, Frank Luntz singled out insurers when he briefed congressional Republicans on how to stop Democratic reforms. "For ten years we were carrying the water of the insurance companies because they were backing us on health care," *Congressional Quarterly* reported Luntz telling members. "Well, they're not anymore. They've sold out."

BUT AHIP'S SUPPORT for reform has clear limits—most clearly over the prospect of creating a government-run insurance plan, an issue on which AHIP remains in close lockstep with both Republicans and its erstwhile health-industry allies. If the government created such a plan, it could take advantage of lower administrative costs—not to mention government pricing power—to offer lower premiums. It would also, by law, make insurance available to all applicants at the same price. If private insurers couldn't keep pace—if they couldn't realize the same efficiencies or make insurance as widely available—they'd lose business.

Ignagni's response, characteristically, is that a public plan would be redundant—that federal regulation is enough to make affordable coverage available to all. But her definition of regulation is looser than what many reformers have in mind. AHIP has not yet endorsed extending rules about community rating beyond "micro-businesses"—that is, firms with ten or fewer employees. That would leave the rest of the small-business market vulnerable to the same price shocks they get now, anytime one or two employees develops cancer or other serious ailments. And some veteran policy makers worry that even strong regulations won't keep the industry in line. "The insurance industry can live with insurance reform because they will always be able to manage risk by marketing, where they choose to sell, how they arrange benefits," says one senior House Democratic aide. "They are very afraid of competing against a public plan that doesn't have their same priority—which is to make money for their shareholders. . . . They'd rather have new tough rules they know they can circumvent."

✳ *FOR MORE ON THE POLITICS OF HEALTH CARE, CHECK OUT JONATHAN COHN'S NEW BLOG,* **THE TREATMENT** *at www.tnr.com*

Fundamentally, the question of whether to include a public plan as part of health care reform is the same as the question of whether to include the insurance-industry lobby as an ally in the reform movement: Are they trustworthy? And that has inevitably brought me back to the question of whether reformers can trust Ignagni herself. Over the past few weeks, I've asked Washington contacts in the policy world versions of that question—and have received a variety of answers. Ron Pollack, executive director of FamiliesUSA and a longtime advocate for universal coverage, has seen enough of Ignagni publicly and privately to believe that "Karen wants to get a 'yes' on meaningful health care reform." Noting that she, and AHIP, strongly supported expansions of government-provided insurance for children, he says, "for those of us who care about universal coverage, she's been a very strong and effective advocate." Others are more skeptical. "You listen to her talk for awhile, you're not always sure what she's saying—but that's on purpose," said one industry lobbyist who has dealt with her. "She's very articulate and tries to look very accommodating, driving people toward the middle—that's her technique." Many think Ignagni is simply trying to make the best of a bad situation, securing for her industry a permanent and profitable place in a new health care system while making sure the drive to cut medical costs doesn't target insurers alone—goals that overlap, substantially if not completely, with those of Obama and his allies. "Her first preference would be no reform," says one veteran Democratic strategist. "But this is as close as the Democrats have come to having the votes to do something serious, so she wants to be the proverbial group at the table rather than on the menu." (Disclosure: I first heard this expression while giving a paid speech to an AHIP meeting last fall; I gave most of the money to charity.)

I finally put the question to its foremost authority: Ignagni herself. During a telephone conversation in early June, I sketched out the apparent change in her advocacy work. "I don't get that," she responded, a little edge creeping into her voice. "I don't understand why you'd say that." I explained my thinking—that calling for aggressive government regulation of insurers in the early 1990s, then opposing it in the late 1990s, and then favoring a version of it now meant she was moving from one side of the health debate to the other, and then back again. She begged to disagree: "It certainly wasn't inconsistent." And then, one more time, she told me the story from our first encounter—of how the entire health insurance industry had evolved and how its members sincerely wanted meaningful reform today.

I'm not sure if I believe that. I'm not sure if she believes that. But maybe, in the end, it doesn't matter. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

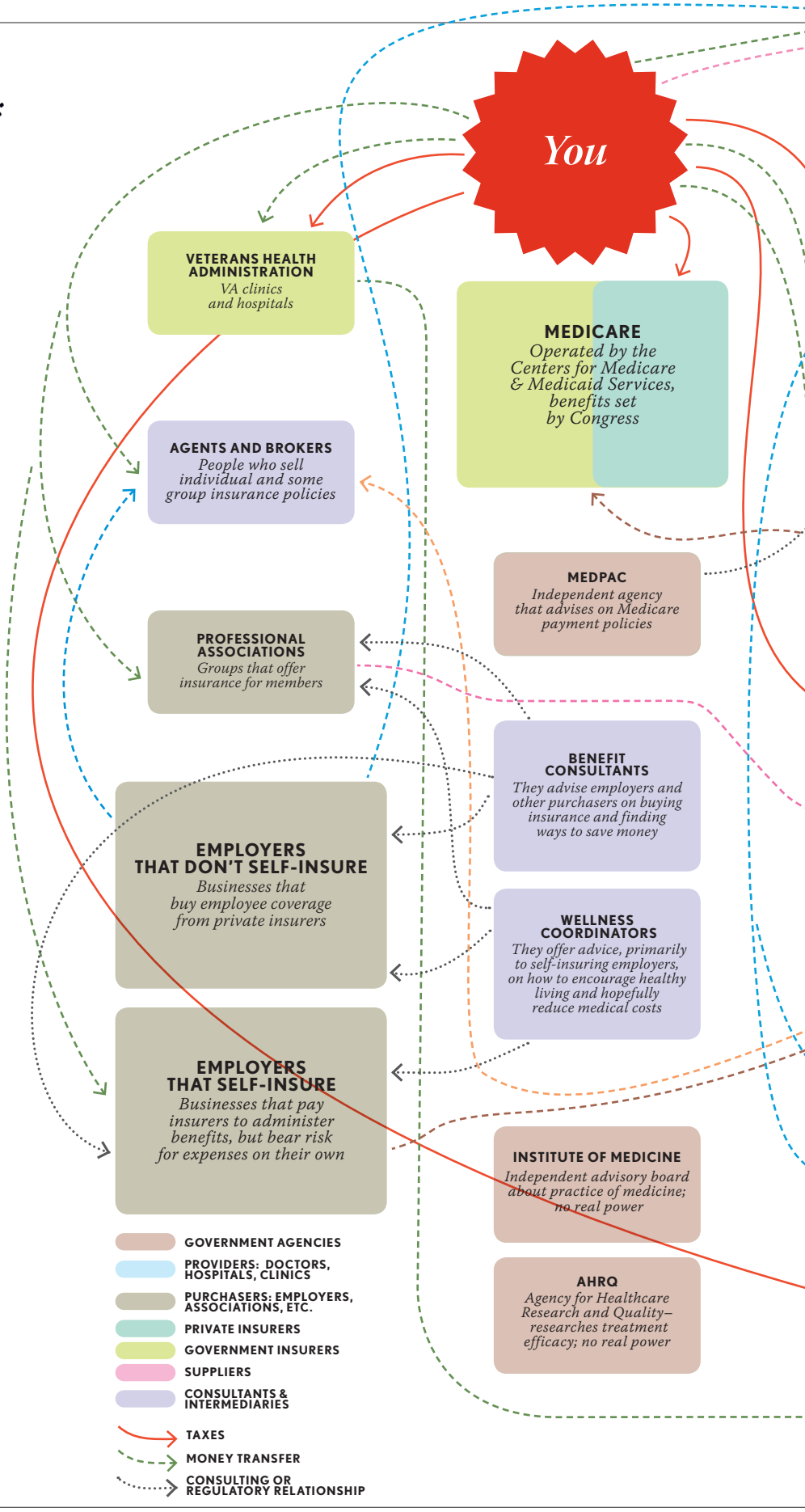
Your Health Care System: *A Map*

If you're trying to pin down a moment from 1994 when the fate of the Clinton health care plan was sealed, you could do worse than January 25. On that night, then-Senator Bob Dole responded to the president's State of the Union address. Clinton had hoped to use the speech to help sell his proposal; Dole used his response to help kill it. And he did it primarily not through what he said, but what he showed on camera.

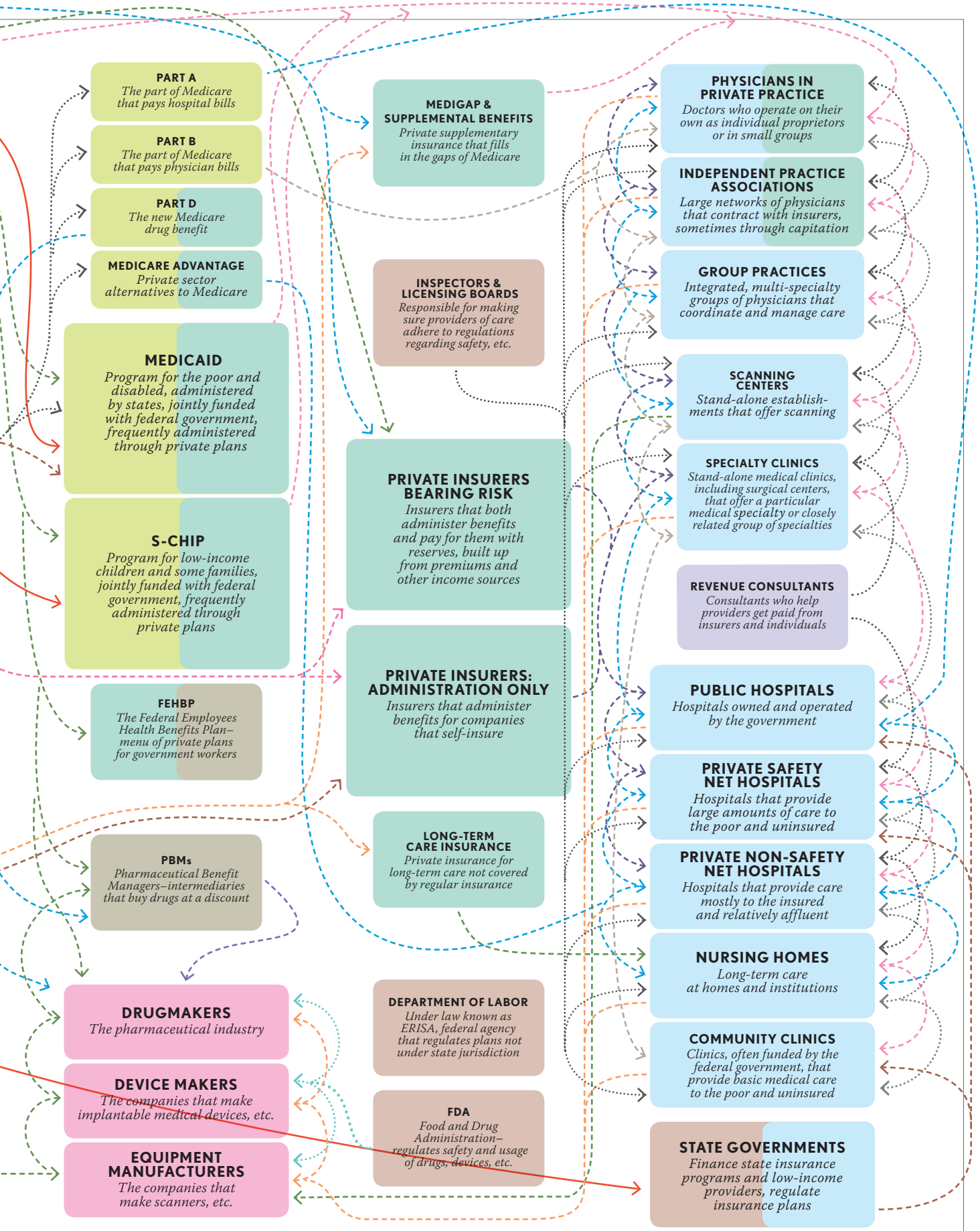
Dole brought with him a chart, depicting how American health care would work if the Clinton plan came into effect. And it was not a pretty picture. Lines were all over the place. The boxes were full of confusing acronyms and scary-sounding institutional titles like "National Health Board" and "Regional Health Alliance." The chart had actually come from a colleague, then-Republican Senator Arlen Specter, who'd asked a staffer to draw it so he could better understand what Clinton had in mind. But Specter—and, soon enough, his Republican colleagues—quickly saw the chart as an effective propaganda weapon.

The impression of the chart was accurate enough: The Clinton plan was tremendously complicated. And given how many of the old Republican arguments against health reform are resurfacing this year, it's likely we'll be seeing a similar chart sometime this summer. But these charts leave out one key fact: The U.S. health care system is already a mind-numbing web of institutions, agencies, and businesses. And, while that may be self-evident to anybody who's ever had to handle a billing dispute between insurer and hospital, it's easy to lose sight of that in the scrum of congressional debate. So, just to keep this very relevant piece of information in mind, we've drawn up our own chart—of American health care, as it is now. And, just to make sure we weren't getting it wrong, we got some help from our friends at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

Jonathan Cohn


You
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
VA clinics and hospitals
MEDICARE
Operated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, benefits set by Congress
AGENTS AND BROKERS
People who sell individual and some group insurance policies
MEDPAC
Independent agency that advises on Medicare payment policies
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
Groups that offer insurance for members
BENEFIT CONSULTANTS
They advise employers and other purchasers on buying insurance and finding ways to save money
EMPLOYERS THAT DON'T SELF-INSURE
Businesses that buy employee coverage from private insurers
WELLNESS COORDINATORS
They offer advice, primarily to self-insuring employers, on how to encourage healthy living and hopefully reduce medical costs
EMPLOYERS THAT SELF-INSURE
Businesses that pay insurers to administer benefits, but bear risk for expenses on their own
INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
Independent advisory board about practice of medicine; no real power
AHRQ
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality–researches treatment efficacy; no real power
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
PROVIDERS: DOCTORS, HOSPITALS, CLINICS
PURCHASERS: EMPLOYERS, ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.
PRIVATE INSURERS
GOVERNMENT INSURERS
SUPPLIERS
CONSULTANTS & INTERMEDIARIES
TAXES
MONEY TRANSFER
CONSULTING OR REGULATORY RELATIONSHIP

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


PART A
The part of Medicare that pays hospital bills
PART B
The part of Medicare that pays physician bills
PART D
The new Medicare drug benefit
MEDICARE ADVANTAGE
Private sector alternatives to Medicare
MEDICAID
Program for the poor and disabled, administered by states, jointly funded with federal government, frequently administered through private plans
S-CHIP
Program for low-income children and some families, jointly funded with federal government, frequently administered through private plans
FEHBP
The Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan–menu of private plans for government workers
PBMs
Pharmaceutical Benefit Managers–intermediaries that buy drugs at a discount
DRUGMAKERS
The pharmaceutical industry
DEVICE MAKERS
The companies that make implantable medical devices, etc.
EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS
The companies that make scanners, etc.
MEDIGAP & SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS
Private supplementary insurance that fills in the gaps of Medicare
INSPECTORS & LICENSING BOARDS
Responsible for making sure providers of care adhere to regulations regarding safety, etc.
PRIVATE INSURERS BEARING RISK
Insurers that both administer benefits and pay for them with reserves, built up from premiums and other income sources
PRIVATE INSURERS: ADMINISTRATION ONLY
Insurers that administer benefits for companies that self-insure
LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE
Private insurance for long-term care not covered by regular insurance
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Under law known as ERISA, federal agency that regulates plans not under state jurisdiction
FDA
Food and Drug Administration–regulates safety and usage of drugs, devices, etc.
PHYSICIANS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE
Doctors who operate on their own as individual proprietors or in small groups
INDEPENDENT PRACTICE ASSOCIATIONS
Large networks of physicians that contract with insurers, sometimes through capitation
GROUP PRACTICES
Integrated, multi-specialty groups of physicians that coordinate and manage care
SCANNING CENTERS
Stand-alone establishments that offer scanning
SPECIALTY CLINICS
Stand-alone medical clinics, including surgical centers, that offer a particular medical specialty or closely related group of specialties
REVENUE CONSULTANTS
Consultants who help providers get paid from insurers and individuals
PUBLIC HOSPITALS
Hospitals owned and operated by the government
PRIVATE SAFETY NET HOSPITALS
Hospitals that provide large amounts of care to the poor and uninsured
PRIVATE NON-SAFETY NET HOSPITALS
Hospitals that provide care mostly to the insured and relatively affluent
NURSING HOMES
Long-term care at homes and institutions
COMMUNITY CLINICS
Clinics, often funded by the federal government, that provide basic medical care to the poor and uninsured
STATE GOVERNMENTS
Finance state insurance programs and low-income providers, regulate insurance plans

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Zeke's Anatomy

Meet the nice Emanuel brother. Well, the nicest.

NOAM SCHEIBER

In 1995, John Gallin, the head of the clinical center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), decided the nation's premier medical research facility should have a vibrant bioethics program. He embarked on a lengthy search, soliciting dozens of resumés and interviewing several candidates, before settling on a Harvard-trained M.D./Ph.D. named Ezekiel Emanuel to lead it. Emanuel, who goes by Zeke, was young (not yet 40) and relatively unknown outside the field of medical ethics. But, with his energy and a combination of clinical and scholarly credentials, he seemed uniquely suited to the task Gallin had set: Building the country's top bioethics department on a shoestring budget.

Gallin knew his prize recruit was unorthodox; precisely how unorthodox became clear shortly after Emanuel's arrival. In his first real act as department head, Emanuel opted to take Gallin's directive quite literally, trying his hand at interior design. As Emanuel recently explained it to me, Gallin had given him some 6,000 square feet to house the new program. But the space was a series of disconnected rooms—"basically a bunch of rabbit warrens"—divided by a cavernous, double-wide hallway. "I said to him, 'First, this sucks,'" Emanuel recalls. "'No one will be together. Second, you have all this dead space [the hallway].'"

And so, along with an architect friend who agreed to help, Emanuel set about turning the hallway into an enormous communal space, around which he reorganized the offices of his future faculty. The aesthetic that emerged was something you might call Museum of Natural History eclectic. Instead of store-bought desks, he affixed slabs of Formica onto file cabinets. On the walls, he hung African masks and Australian aboriginal drawings. "You know, you could put up some shitty Picasso poster, or you could get original aboriginal art at almost the same price," he told me.

Fortunately for both men, Emanuel would translate this same resourcefulness into building a team that would do Gallin proud. Over the decade-plus that he actively oversaw the department, Emanuel lured a healthy cadre of bioethics researchers to NIH from places like Brown, Princeton, and the University of Virginia. Together they churned out hundreds of articles in places like *The New England Journal of Medicine* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Many now consider Emanuel among the most influential bioethicists in the country.

Which is perhaps why it's both surprising and quite fitting that Emanuel, the brother of the president's chief of staff, has turned up as a senior official at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under its director, Peter Orszag. Despite the agency's reputation for colorless bean-counting, Orszag has quietly assembled one of the most intellectually imaginative teams anywhere in the administration. In addition to Emanuel, there's Cass Sunstein, a renowned constitutional scholar (and longtime contributor to The New Republic), and Jeff Liebman, a Harvard economist and top Obama campaign adviser. Robert Gordon, a former Supreme Court clerk who was the policy guru behind John Edwards's 2004 presidential run, oversees education and labor issues. Xavier Briggs, an MIT urban planning professor, keeps an eye on everything from housing to homeland security. As his top communications aide, Orszag hired Kenneth Baer, who co-founded the policy journal *Democracy* in 2005.

The collective brainpower of the Orszag high command is beyond dispute. What's remarkable is the influence they exert over administration policy. In a town that's often run by political operatives and slick K Street lobbyists, the Orszag intellectuals are shaping everything from health care reform to climate-change legislation. And none quite epitomizes this model of administration praxis like the Emanuel brother who goes by "doctor."

Walk into the health care suite at OMB and you'll see a young assistant manning a standard-issue desk, on which rests a tray full of mini candy bars. Several paces behind her is the door to the imposing office of OMB associate director Keith Fontenot, the health care numbers whiz Orszag brought with him from the Congressional Budget Office. Just to the assistant's left, in a kind of glorified cubicle whose paper-thin walls don't quite extend to the ceiling, sits Zeke Emanuel. Most days Emanuel huddles over a cramped desk that is visible to pretty much anyone who drops by for chocolate.

Emanuel had gotten to know Orszag in recent years thanks to their shared interest in health care reform. The day the White House named Orszag budget director, Emanuel e-mailed his future boss and asked, half-joking, if he needed a doctor on his team. Orszag replied that the two of them should talk and, that evening, called to ask when Emanuel would be joining him. This is where the cubicle comes in. "Basically, I said, 'I'd love to come over, but I want to be in the building, near your office,'" Emanuel told me. Let it not be said that the Emanuel brothers don't appreciate the way power flows through Washington.

Emanuel is officially "Special Advisor for Health Policy," and his ambiguous place in (or, rather, outside) the OMB bureaucracy can create minor strains. His memos don't always swim through the normal channels, but they have a knack for finding Orszag's desk. (One memo, about the administration's global health initiative, triggered a small shift in new funding toward child and maternal health, to the dismay of activists who sought more money for HIV.) On a recent Sunday in Chicago, I saw Emanuel speak to a group of Albert Schweitzer Fellows—students in health-related fields whose mission is to serve struggling populations. The fellows shared their frustrations with the current health care system—not enough incentives to practice primary care rather than specialize, not enough time with patients. Emanuel listened intently and, at the end of the session, announced that he'd jotted down four or five key points, which he'd be "sending e-mails [to colleagues] about tomorrow morning." It did not sound like idle talk.

Whatever the organizational implications, this model of intellectual activism seems to have been what Orszag had in mind

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when he staffed his department this winter. "This sort of alignment doesn't happen by accident," Orszag recently told me, flashing a conspiratorial grin. Other government agencies also have their share of academic types, of course. But OMB's may be unique in their range of interests. Sunstein, who will be the government's "regulatory czar" pending Senate confirmation, has written about everything from law and economics to the Internet and democracy to *Moneyball*. Liebman, who is OMB's fourth-ranking official, is part of the health care team and spends considerable mental energy helping incorporate behavioral economics into administration policy. (He recently convened an in-house seminar on the subject.) This collection of personnel can sometimes make OMB feel more like the RAND Corporation than the administration's in-house budget scold.

For all its big ideas, though, Orszag's group is mostly preoccupied with notching victories. The OMB intellectuals pride themselves on mixing easily with bureaucratic doers like Fontenot and deputy OMB director Rob Nabors, a former congressional staffer who was critical in crafting the stimulus bill. When I posited the think-tank conceit to Orszag, he conceded the point but pushed back at the characterization. "I don't want OMB to be driven just by a very narrow focus without ideas coming into play. But you can't let it just be an academic debating society either," he said. "If you're too theoretical, you don't actually execute."

The evidence that OMB excels at execution is not hard to find. In addition to the budget and the stimulus bill, on which OMB left a large institutional imprint, the agency has also seized a leading role on health care—one aided by the fact that Orszag was up and running with personnel when Tom Daschle's bid to be health secretary ran aground. Of the ten officials from half a dozen agencies who meet almost daily to hash out the administration's reform efforts, no fewer than three—Emanuel, Liebman, and Fontenot—reside at OMB.

And it's not just health care. Earlier this spring, I happened to meet two administration officials working with OMB on a multi-agency initiative that was about to be unveiled. The two officials were anxious that, despite assurances to the contrary, OMB would charge ahead and announce its portion prematurely, relegating the rest to an afterthought in the media. The officials were especially concerned about details trickling out on OMB's blog. "We do try to make sure we don't surprise people," Orszag says. "But I do think that if we—and we're not there—if we got into the practice of excessively delaying something like a blog post … you start to stifle the intellectual energy that generates ideas."

The Saturday night before his talk with the Schweitzer Fellows, I joined Emanuel for dinner at Charlie Trotter's, one of his favorite restaurants in Chicago. While waiting for him to pick me up at my hotel, I Googled the restaurant and discovered that it was more than a khakis-and-blazer affair. This made me slightly self-conscious standing outside in my khakis and blazer. All the more so when Emanuel showed up in a sleek blue suit.

Emanuel is a trim man of average height with slightly thinning grey hair. It was only when he got out of the car that I felt a twinge of relief. On his feet was a pair of beige suede shoes that might be charitably described as risky. I was reminded of something his longtime friend Greg Keating had told me. "Ari"—the third Emanuel brother, whose career as a Hollywood agent has been chronicled in the HBO series "Entourage"—"is extremely suave. When he goes to dinner … he's the most polished person in the room," Keating had said. "Zeke couldn't care less about it. Ari winces at his complete indifference."

Of course, Zeke is not exactly a monk. It took us more than three hours to make our way through an eight-course tasting menu. (His favorite: red shiso sorbet with mango—"Clarifying. Like a waterfall or something." Among his least favorite: the sea urchin "amuse-guele"—"Better than the last sea urchin I had. … It has a slight turpentine taste if it sits around for any length of time.") Later, on our way back from the restaurant, he couldn't get over a high-tech oven we'd seen while touring the kitchen. The oven combined two heating mechanisms—microwave and high-speed convection—and could cook a whole turkey in under 45 minutes. "I know I'm obsessing about this oven," he told me, contemplating whether it would be gauche to buy one.

✳
For more on the battle to fix our economy, check out Noam Scheiber's new blog, **THE STASH** *at www.tnr.com*

Still, one could hardly accuse Zeke Emanuel of leading a shallow existence. He earned his Ph.D. in 1989, and, in 1991, Harvard University Press published his dissertation as a book called *The Ends of Human Life*. In the book, Emanuel argues that the kind of liberal political philosophy associated with thinkers like John Rawls—in which the state is scrupulously neutral between different value systems—is incapable of resolving our thorniest questions of medical ethics. There's simply no way to decide, say, when to pull the plug on a comatose patient without injecting one's own values. (If, for example, you let the family decide, you're implicitly elevating its importance as an institution.) Emanuel's alternative was to allow different communities to arrive at different answers to these agonizing questions based on their own "conceptions of the good life."

But the book is interesting for another reason. To put it simply, Emanuel seemed to use his dissertation to grapple with his ambivalence about his own identity. On the one hand, he writes, community gives meaning to a person's life; participation in a community allows us to "transcend [our] mortality." On the other hand, community can imprison us. "If I wasn't born into a particular kind of Jewish family at a particular moment in history, would I have been a doctor? No chance," he says. "It obviously is the fact that my father"—also a doctor—"is pushing me very, very hard." Emanuel hated medical school so much that, after his first year, he fled to TNR for a summer internship. He eventually came to philosophy after his third year as a kind of compromise. "I did this Ph.D. thing to at least do medicine my own way if I was going to do it," he says.

And yet, wherever he went, he wore his identity on his sleeve. His undergraduate days at Amherst were miserable: "It was a culture clash. I came to this WASP institution, and I was a very aggressive Jewish kid from Chicago." While doing a master's degree in England, he participated in a kind of proto-reality show on the BBC, in which students and farmers and businessmen from Oxford and Cambridge performed a variety of (often menial) tasks. He remembers the review in a local publication proclaiming him "the worst of all things—a pain in the ear." But it was Harvard that was most oppressive. "I mean, medical school is the worst. You know, the hierarchy—the low guys never challenge the top guys." When Emanuel got rejected from a residency at the prestigious Brigham and Women's Hospital, the dean of students explained that "they didn't think they could tolerate you."

One thing you notice if you spend more than a few minutes around Emanuel is his indifference—outright hostility, actually—to authority. A friend from college told me Emanuel had once been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pulled over by a cop while driving back to Amherst with an African American classmate. Emanuel accused the cop of racial profiling; I asked how the cop had taken it. "They never react well," he told me. "What landed me in prison in Oxford is precisely this kind of stuff." Wait, prison? "I was bicycling home after my mentor's son's bar mitzvah." It was about midnight and a cop flagged him down inexplicably. "He says, 'Are you drunk?' And I said, 'No, I'm not drunk.' Because I don't drink. And, uh, I blew in his face to prove it."

Zeke is unquestionably an Emanuel, in other words. The subject of the brothers has become a bona fide pastime in Washington of late, as the three men have ascended to the top of their respective fields. But, for all of the fascination with Rahm, it's the relationship between Zeke and Ari that may be most intriguing. Whereas Rahm, the middle son, displays elements of both his brothers—some of Zeke's wonkiness, some of Ari's instincts for deal-making—one sometimes struggles to see how the eldest (Zeke) and youngest Emanuel siblings relate to one another. For example, while Ari is an HBO icon, Zeke rarely even watches television. When I brought this up at dinner, Emanuel initially protested. "You shouldn't sell Ari short," he said. "He's very committed to the environment—very keen and knowledgeable. He's also quite keen and knowledgeable about health issues." But he conceded that even here the two men differ in sensibility. "Ari's a bit of a hypochondriac," he said. "I went for like fifteen years without ever seeing the doctor."

One thing you notice if you spend more than a few minutes around Zeke Emanuel is his outright hostility to authority.

If Orszag wasn't aware of it beforehand, he has surely learned you could do worse than to have an Emanuel at your side in a fight. Despite Rahm's reputation, Zeke says he reflects the family's shortest-distance-between-two-points ethos even more so than his politician brother. ("Ironically, I'm more brute force than he is. I have nowhere near the talent he does for seeing what other people are feeling.") Certainly, his ideas about health care are direct and unadorned. In a book he published last year laying out a model for reform, Emanuel dwelled at length on the irrationality of the employer-based system—which creates huge administrative costs and saddles small companies with enormous expenses—and the practice of compensating physicians and hospitals for services rendered rather than the outcomes achieved, leading to a proliferation of unnecessary (and pricey) procedures.

Emanuel insisted that fixing these structural defects, along with a handful of other ideas like collecting data on the effectiveness of treatments, was the only way to bring down costs. He criticized the kind of "mandate" plan the administration and congressional Democrats are now weighing, which builds on the employer-based system. "Mandate plans do not exclude the possibility of having … initiatives to address cost control and quality," he wrote. "But at best these would be 'lipstick' initiatives—put on for show." Most economists and health wonks agreed that the employer-based system was dysfunctional, but many argued that the political obstacles to a wholesale junking were insurmountable.

These days, some of these same people praise Emanuel's pragmatism. "Zeke is taking the president's plan and trying to think through how you would structure it, make it work most effectively," says an administration official involved in the health care effort. "It's not like he sits in meetings trying to shape the Obama plan to be his own."

But, perhaps not surprisingly, Emanuel digs deepest into his healthy reserve of enthusiasm for the parts of the plan that dovetail with his own ideas. At the top of this list is a so-called insurance exchange—a regulated market in which people who lack coverage through their employer (and maybe people who work at small companies, though that's still being negotiated) could choose from a variety of private plans, which would offer at least a minimum level of benefits and could not discriminate by health status. "He's a key thinker on the exchange. How it operates. How it interacts with insurance market reform," says the administration official.

On the one hand, the exchange is absolutely central to the Obama plan—it's how the uninsured get covered. So it's worth having Emanuel's considerable brainpower on the problem. On the other hand, one can imagine a future in which the employer-based system gradually withers away, leaving everyone to purchase insurance on the exchange. Though Emanuel scrupulously avoids such discussions, it's hard to believe the thought has never occurred to him.

In the meantime, expect to see more of Zeke Emanuel as the health care battle intensifies. The weekend we spoke, *The New York Times Magazine* had published a long piece about White House legislative strategy on health care. I asked who from the administration was likely to hammer out the final shape of the package on Capitol Hill. Rahm and Phil Schiliro, the chief White House congressional lobbyist, seemed like a lock, I said. So did Orszag and Nancy-Ann DeParle, the health care czar. Emanuel would only say that, "There are things we care about. You have to keep your eye on the ball, otherwise the ball could escape." In that case, it may be worth asking again if the White House needs a doctor on the team. ◆

NANCY STONE/MCT/LANDOV

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOW IS THE TIME FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM. Time for changes that result in quality, affordable, cost-effective care for everyone, and greater emphasis on prevention and evidence-based medicine. America's physician assistants are an integral part of the solution. PAs increase access to patient-centered medical and surgical services. **Click on "Advocacy" at www.aapa.org to find out more.**

American Academy of
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS
Connecting PAs. Transforming Care

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Narrative Dissonance

What the Cairo speech got wrong.

MARTIN PERETZ

"I mean, in a way, Obama's standing above the country, above—above the world, he's sort of God." These drug-addicted words come from Evan Thomas, a longtime editor at *Newsweek*. He uttered them on Chris Matthews's MSNBC show. Such words would wreak havoc on any person's ego, even Barack Obama's. It also would enrage his enemies.

After all, the president has told us that he is a mere student of history, and *that* he is.

But history these days is no longer a discipline inclined to defend the truthfulness of its claims or the reasonableness of its arguments or the plausibility of its conclusions. More and more, history has become a competition between and among narratives, self-consciously disdainful of what we used to think of as fact. In this intellectual competition, the losers almost always win or, at least, they win the "moral argument." Not in real history, mind you, but in many a Western professor's classroom. And, sometimes, in an American president's mind.

The truth is that Barack Obama has a penchant for these narratives and yet an inclination to rise above them. Two grand but antithetical stories about the same problem, awaiting him and his Olympian skill for the discovery of "common ground": That is Obama's favorite script. He regards himself as a kind of unprecedented referee between histories and philosophies. He likes to think that he can see what others cannot see and that, therefore, they must come to him if they wish to live in peace and with meaning. He did this with race in the Philadelphia speech, articulating what blacks see from their end of the periscope and what whites see from theirs. (Until, that is, he had to dump his minister from the campaign truck as a matter of survival. "Common ground" is sometimes not discovered so much as invented, or imposed.) A man of not especially discriminate empathy, he sees himself in the Whitmanesque sense of containing multitudes.

In addressing American intelligence and security professionals at the National Archives, the president again aimed at bridging differences by showing that apparent contradictions are not contradictions at all and that everything will go together, if only for as long as he is speaking. National security that never compromises national values? No problem. National values that guarantee national security? Say it and it will be done. Yes, we have values that elevate and restrict us at once, the ideal of free men and women that procedurally protects also the guilty and the wicked—and never mind that, absent energetic domestic and international defenses, these principles would be outmaneuvered and outclassed on both fronts. And again at Notre Dame, the same above-it-all structure of rhetorical conciliation was applied by Obama to the subject of abortion. "Open hearts. Open minds. Fair-minded words." Nice enough. But the debate on abortion will not be so tidily retired. All of this is rising above but not really reconciling.

I suppose that President Obama thinks that in Cairo he bridged many narratives. He certainly appeared to try: on the one hand, on the other, us and them, more or less equal in our stories. But real history is the telling and interpretation of actual happenings. It is specific, concrete, particular; it eats analogies and commonalities for breakfast; and it requires what used to be called knowledge—correct facts and warranted interpretations of them. From the standpoint of knowledge, not every assertion has equal weight, even if it is deeply felt.

There are two basic narratives to the nearly century-old Jewish and Arabs-of-Palestine dispute. The sheer truthfulness of these narratives is so unbalanced that Obama or his panel of oddly partisan experts must have felt obliged to tamper with real history. What is most brazen or, at best, bizarre in Obama's historical recitation is the stark omission of the whole Zionist enterprise. Instead, he chose to understand the Jewish presence in Palestine as a sort of restitution for the Holocaust. For the president, the balancing of claims—and they must always be balanced; he does not tolerate asymmetries, which would make his divine even-handedness impossible—requires distortion of what actually happened. First off was to diminish the determination of the Jewish people through the ages, and especially since the age of nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century, to reclaim their homeland, to bring its very earth out of desolation and restore its dispersed sons and daughters to Zion—all this not as a reparation, but as a right. By the time World War II—before the Holocaust, that is—began, there were already more than 500,000 Jews in Palestine. Most of them had arrived as their palpable reply to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, to the approval by the League of Nations of a British mandate for a Jewish homeland in Palestine in 1922, to the recommendations of the Peel Commission for a two-state settlement. None of this enters the president's text, not even a hint of it, perhaps because it might muddle the clarity of the equal-claim argument.

What perhaps the president doesn't recall from the history he studied is that Jewish sovereignty in postwar Palestine was only one of several rearrangements contemplated for the vast territories that had been governed by the Ottoman Empire, now expired. From this land mass emerged the states of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, North Yemen, and various other adjustments of frontiers on behalf of the Wilsonian principle of the self-determination of nations. These countries, composing almost the entire Fertile Crescent, were vouchsafed to the Arabs, their first experiments at self-government in history. (Did these experiments work? That's for each of us to judge.) Tiny Palestine was intended for the Jews. They were already at work in the desert, in the swamps, in their *kibbutzim*, in their new cities, including Tel Aviv, in their bourgeois enterprises, in their universities and research institutions. And, moreover, they had revived their ancient language, making it a living tongue with ancient cadence and modern purpose. Hitler had exactly nothing to do with this revolution. Is all this not a revolution worthy of presidential recognition?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When Obama attributes the establishment of Israel, and also Israel's fear that the Iranian government and many Arabs would quite happily visit another devastation on it, to the Holocaust, he is in fact accepting Dr. Ahmadinejad's analysis of the Zionist triumph and also one of the tenets of Palestinian rejectionism, which is that the Palestinians are correct in their phobia that they have paid the price for what the Nazis did to the Jews.

If the president does not grasp Israel's history, he should be more modest in his judgments. Here's just one huge fact that does not fit into the president's sweeping explanation for the success of the Jewish state: Why did more than 800,000 Jews return to Zion from their thousands of years of exile in the Muslim world beginning with the very morn of independence? Surely this rupturing of communal life dating back, in some cases, three millennia was not Holocaust-related.

"*On the other hand*"—remember, there must be symmetries—the president declared in his parallel reading to the Jewish catastrophe that "it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people—Muslims and Christians—have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than sixty years they have endured the pain of dislocation." Obama went on: "Many wait in refugee camps . . . they endure the daily humiliations—large and small—that come with occupation . . . the situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own." Nor should America turn its back.

But it should also perceive that Palestinian history and Arab history, as written by themselves and told and retold to schoolchildren, is a blame-the-other history. A keen observer of the West Bank and Gaza describes a teacher in a Bethlehem school and his thoughts about his pupils:

> He began to read through their short essays on the demise of the Ottoman Empire. He spent a great deal of his time, too much of it, angry with these children. He tried not to be, but he couldn't stand to listen to them when they rolled through the political clichés of the poor, victimized Arab nation, subjugated by everyone from the Crusaders and the Mongols to the Turks and the British, all the way to the intifada. It wasn't wrong to see the Arabs as victims of a harsh history, but it was a mistake to assume that they bore no responsibility for their own sufferings.

This meditation is from Omar Yussef, the hero of three detective fictions by Matt Beynon Rees, this one called *The Collaborator of Bethlehem*. We are in a bad way when a novelist, even a skilled novelist, has a more secure and sophisticated hold on the realities of Palestine than the president's tutors.

There is a little bit of razzle-dazzle even in how Obama treats numbers. It's not only Muslims who have suffered in occupied Palestine. Also Christians. But probably less than 2 percent of the population—maybe 45,000 souls—in the West Bank are Christian, a steep decline attributable mostly to the radical Islamicization of the territories. Fewer and fewer Christians can survive the mayhem around them, and they go to where other Christians from the Arab world have escaped before them, to Australia, for example, and to Dearborn, Michigan. The remaining Christians live terrorized lives, and Israel the occupier is actually their shield. (In Gaza by now, there may be as few as 2,000 Christians.) A similar looseness with numbers is in the president's bald announcement that there are seven million Muslims in the United States. QED. That number shouldn't upset anyone. Still, I believe that Obama is—how shall I put this?—breaking demographic ground.

I, too, am for a two-state solution. I always have been. As the president said, "many Israelis recognize the need for a Palestinian state"; he should have said "most" rather than "many." For most Israelis recognize that need, and their governments have tried to negotiate toward that end. Alas, Obama cannot and does not say that most or even many Palestinians recognize the need for a Jewish state or even, for that matter, the Israeli state. Here there is no symmetry, alas, that will serve. The most he can say is that, "privately, many Muslims recognize that Israel will not go away." Why does he not say "many Palestinians"? Perhaps because it would be stark deception. So which Muslims? The democratic but, alas, irrelevant and tolerant

The end of the British Mandate in Palestine: "What is most bizarre in Obama's historical narrative is the omission of the entire Zionist enterprise."

ROBERT CAPA/CORNELL CAPA/MAGNUM PHOTOS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Muslims of Indonesia? Or Cairenes, especially the intellectuals, who have lived under a peace treaty with Jerusalem for all of three decades, but have not quite accommodated themselves to the existence of Israel?

The Arabs of Palestine have been violently opposed to the existence of two states since the beginning. But, since the president goes back only six decades, I will abide by his timelines.

On May 14, 1948, Lieutenant General Sir Alan Cunningham, the seventh and last British High Commissioner, struck the Union Jack from Jerusalem's Government House (and, later that day, from his departing ship in Haifa Bay) as a solitary Scottish bagpiper played the joyless Highland Lament. The Partition Plan for Palestine, approved by the United Nations General Assembly on November 29, 1947, had effectively brought the Crown's self-mortification with the end of the Mandate. Read carefully the delicately negotiated words of the Plan: The mandate was to be split into a "Jewish state" in Palestine, mostly desert, and an "Arab state" in Palestine. This is the two-state solution that used to be called "partition," which the Jews accepted and the Arabs did not. The fact is that no one stood up to receive the gift of internationally recognized independence for the Arabs in Palestine, and no surprise. There was little national sentiment among them. The privileged family of Edward Said, like other privileged families, had moved to Cairo already in late 1947.

Syrian, Egyptian, and Jordanian armies were marched into what had been designated Arab Palestine so they might accrue for their own countries what had been assigned to the locals and whatever else might be carved out of the new Jewish state by war. In the north, the country's Arabs fought mostly for Syria. To the east, they fought mostly as brawlers for King Abdullah's British-trained and British-commanded Arab Legion, which ended up controlling the West Bank and soon annexed it to Jordan itself. In the south, what little provincial participation there was, they were on the side of Egypt, personified in those days by the comically rotund King Farouk, fez on his head, who would govern Gaza—no one in, no one out—until the colonels bounced him and his throne in 1952. So much for Palestinian nationalism.

When Yasir Arafat founded the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1963, he set it not at all against the land's Arab occupiers but against the Jewish state. There was no thought then of a two-state solution. I believe that whatever mouthing there has been among the Palestinians about two states is like Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, the EU and various Americans eagerly playing the puppeteer. No one had the courage among the Arabs to say what Chaim Weizman told his fellow Zionists: We shall accept a state the size of a tablecloth. And, of course, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert offered their Arab neighbors much more. In fact, 97 percent of the West Bank and much of Jerusalem. They had the backing of their publics, too. But Israelis are no longer so amiable and cooperative. With good and sufficient reason.

I suppose that if so many Israelis can absolve the Palestinian Arabs of their history (or the lack thereof), Barack Obama can do so, as well. After all, pain they have plenty. How could it be otherwise? Looking across the 60-year-old armistice lines and what they see of Israel on television (also, ever less in person) is the absolute negation of the lack of progress in their own lives, both individual and communal. To be sure, any people that allowed a mountebank like Arafat to hijack its already flimsy national aspirations will be punished, not by God Almighty, but by what the *rais* and his successors have together sown: the weeds of wild violence, unsurpassed corruption, hatred of the neighbor, the confusion of history, and falsehood, and an allergy to true learning. All of these are, to be ruthlessly truthful, intrinsic to the Palestinian inheritance.

It was more than a bit disconcerting to hear the President give strict instructions to Israel via an Arab audience when his admonition to Muslims was actually quite docile and fuzzy. One vaporous instance: "The richness of religious diversity must be upheld . . . fault lines must be closed among Muslims as well, as the divisions between Sunni and Shia have led to tragic violence, particularly in Iraq." From Obama's mouth to God's ears. Or more precisely, perhaps, from Obama's mouth to Obama's ears.

But "it is time for the settlements to stop." Which settlements? Does the president believe that several particular Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem are "settlements"? Fess up. If they aren't, and the towns abutting the armistice lines aren't either, the president may have a deal. If not, he's in a fight against real history. And, believe me, I am mortified by many of the settlements. I think they are dangerous for the Jewish state. But not as dangerous as leaving the West Bank in unreliable Palestinian hands. Like in Gaza. But what does the president think is the consequence if Netanyahu actually stops construction in the settlements, however described and defined? What does Obama think is the next step? Will the Palestinians be more forthcoming, and with what? Will the next step be to coerce Israel into taking in some Palestinians who are, 60 years after, still defined as refugees although they live only ten miles away from where their great-grandmothers made falafel?

So, in the end, the grand conciliator violated his own principle and spoke asymmetrically: He was very tough on Israel, but he was vague to the Palestinians and to the Arabs. The president was not at all specific about what he wished from people who are still enemies of the Jewish state. Every Israeli concession requires a reciprocal concession, and not just words. But even words are difficult to extract from the Palestinian Authority, the so-called moderates. Mahmoud Abbas said only a fortnight ago that he had only to wait on what Israel surrenders. No reproach from anybody in Washington, except a few honest journalists.

There was one startling passage in Obama's speech that very few commentators have noticed, perhaps because they also don't know their history. "Islam has always been a part of America's story. The first nation to recognize my country was Morocco. In signing the Treaty of Tripoli in 1796, our second president, John Adams, wrote, 'The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Muslims.'" Now, as Michael Oren recounts in his magisterial history of America's enmeshment in the region, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, the fact is that this treaty, which imposed a ransom of money and ships on the Americans, was a fraud. Moreover, within four years, Tripoli captured another U.S. ship and went on to take into captivity other American vessels and their crews. Suffice it to say that wars, declared by the Pasha of Tripoli and undeclared, continued with more death and more ransom, until 1815. Let it be hoped that the Treaty of Tripoli in which President Obama delights so much will not be a precedent for the agreement he wants to forge between Israel and the Palestinians or between the United States and Iran. It is also a scandal that no one on his intimate staff told him the facts—if, indeed, they knew them—about the settlements with the Barbary Pirates. They are a precedent for nothing, except cheap getting-to-yes ecumenicism. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America and the New Global Economy

The origins of our globalized economy, its effects on important contemporary concerns, and its future trends are a few of the many intriguing topics you explore in **America and the New Global Economy**. In these 36 illuminating lectures, you investigate the recent history of economies in countries and regions such as China, India, and the Middle East and focus on important world economic issues, including labor flow, population growth, and foreign aid.

Taught by expert economist and Professor Timothy Taylor—managing editor of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*—**America and the New Global Economy** is your opportunity to understand all the latest developments on the world economic stage.

This course is one of The Great Courses®, a noncredit recorded college lecture series from The Teaching Company®. Award-winning professors of a wide array of subjects in the sciences and the liberal arts have made more than 250 college-level courses that are available now on our website.

America and the New Global Economy

Taught by Professor Timothy Taylor, Macalester College

Lecture Titles

1. The World Economy since 1950
2. The U.S. in the World Economy—1960 to 1995
3. The U.S. Economy Resurgent?
4. Europe—From Catch-Up to Jobless Growth
5. The Single European Market
6. The Rise of the Euro
7. The Economy of the Soviet Union
8. Transitions from Communism to Markets
9. Japan's Economic Miracle
10. When Japan's Bubble Economy Burst
11. Government versus Market in East Asia
12. East Asia's Tigers—Restore the Roar?
13. China's Gradualist Economic Reforms
14. China's Challenges for Continued Growth
15. India and the License Raj
16. India's Turn toward Market Economics
17. Inherited Institutions in the Middle East
18. The Curse of Oil Wealth in the Middle East
19. Africa's Geography and History
20. Time for Optimism on Africa?
21. Latin America and Import Substitution
22. Markets or Populism in Latin America?
23. Globalization in Goods and Services
24. Globalization of Capital Flows
25. The Foreign Exchange Market
26. Migration—Senders and Recipients
27. Global Population Growth
28. World Poverty—Growth or Redistribution?
29. Global Food Markets—The Supply-Demand Race
30. An Urbanizing World
31. Women in the Global Economy
32. Improving Governance, Fighting Corruption
33. Foreign Aid—Promises and Limits
34. The Multilaterals—World Bank, IMF, WTO
35. The Economics of Global Climate Change
36. Globalization and Convergence

Order Today!
Offer expires Friday, August 14, 2009

America and the New Global Economy
Course No. 5620
36 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

DVDs ~~$374.95~~ NOW $99.95
+ $15 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audio CDs ~~$269.95~~ NOW $69.95
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Priority Code: 33251

ACT NOW!

1-800-TEACH-12
www.TEACH12.com/8nrep

The Teaching Company®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day®
Great Professors, Great Courses, Great Value Guaranteed®

© 2008 Agencia Corporation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

ONE AND MANY

Séraphine de Senlis (1864–1942) was a servant and a painter. She worked as a housemaid, a laundress, a butcher's helper, anything she could find. She also painted, in her room at night. Some of her work now hangs in museums.

The French director Martin Provost has made a film about her, called *Séraphine*, which he wrote with Marc Abdelnour. Laurent Brunet is at the camera, and Yolande Moreau is in the title role. Of course the prevailing sensibility was Provost's, but the gifts of all these people have created a film that holds and enfolds. And it leaves us with an ancient haunting mystery.

Séraphine is Provost's fourth feature, and clearly he wanted to do more than tell the story of her life, which is much too singular for mere recounting. He wanted the very texture of the film to amplify the story as it unfolded. With Brunet's cinematography, in which beauty is immediate, and with Moreau's acting, which is an embrace more than a performance, and with his own insight and spirit, Provost has made a picture that is almost biblical in its simplicity and its passion. More, he has brought about a paradox: *Séraphine*, like many superior films, is part of the film world yet seems nearly to renounce it.

It is 1914 in Senlis, a town not far from Paris. No music at the start, then a chorus is heard as we move across a body of water into a church and there discover Séraphine praying, singing. She is middle-aged, plain, with the face of a woman resigned to hardship but not beaten by it. Visually, the opening sequence has a suggestion of blue in it, as if the air were azure, and that tint is consistent through most of the film's indoor scenes. The outdoor scenes—the fields, the flowers, the trees—are viewed in such a way that, when eventually we see some of Séraphine's paintings, which are all of trees and flowers, we understand them. We understand, too, why at one point she climbs up a great tree merely to sit on one of its branches, to be with it, to view the world (we believe that she believes) as the tree does.

SÉRAPHINE
Music Box Films

24 CITY
Cinema Guild

Her chief job is as a housemaid in a place where the owner, a sharp woman, takes in tenants. Séraphine is treated brusquely but is no meek slavey: she is sufficiently snippy that, from time to time, her boss reproves her. Yet she slaves. And she has her secret. At night, in her room, she paints, on small wooden panels. She works by candlelight: we even see her tip wax out of lighted church candles into a container that she takes home to refresh her own candles. She grinds her own colors: she paints with her fingers. We never discover how she learned to do any of these things: we just know that it happened.

But we do know how her work is discovered. A German art critic, Wilhelm Uhde, wealthy and renowned, comes to stay in the house where she works and, by accident, sees one of her paintings. He is immediately struck by its adoring yet forceful view of some flowers. He speaks with Séraphine and learns that she is in love with natural things: she talks to trees, to birds, to flowers. He is taken with her ease about her extraordinary feelings. He has influence in Paris and moves to bring her work to others' attention—or would move except that it is now August 1914. The German army is advancing, and if Uhde is found here by the Germans, he will be shot as a deserter. He goes home.

He doesn't return to France until 1927, to a place not far from Senlis, but, possibly because he is involved with a new boyfriend, it is a while before he goes to see Séraphine. This time he really does bring about her critical success in the Paris art world. She makes some money, but Uhde still supports her to a considerable extent. That support is crimped by the Wall Street crash of 1929, which affects his wealth. His sponsorship is even more painfully crimped by Séraphine's mental condition, which begins to deteriorate drastically and swiftly. She is soon put in a mental hospital, where he visits and finds her in a large common room with others. He arranges private quarters for her, paying for them out of the sales of her paintings. This sadly unbalanced woman is thus paying for her own care.

Provost closes his film with a moment that is in essence true to the dark facts yet is lovely. At the end she is given a new hospital room opening on a field. She takes a small chair and starts upward to a lone tree standing on a rise. In a quite long shot we watch as she walks up the hill carrying that chair, then sits under the tree, the closest she can now come to that earlier moment in a tree. Our distance from her, the wholeness of this last shot—sky, hill, large tree, small woman—make it heartbreaking.

Ulrich Tukur as Uhde provides the contemptuous pride of a connoisseur burdened with perception when so many others are myopic. Uhde sees Séraphine as a naïve artist (something like Le Douanier Rousseau, whose career he also influenced), and Tukur con-

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vinces us that Uhde is right. Moreau (unrelated to Jeanne Moreau), a veteran of theater, film, and television, is, oddly enough, best known in France as a comedienne. Here she has clearly seen Séraphine as the role of a lifetime, and she honors it with utter understanding. Séraphine made work that will last, and Moreau has meant to do the same.

The mystery we are left with is perennial. Talent. How did this drudging housemaid learn to paint—learn to want to paint? She loves God's world, but how did she find this means of expressing it? How did she acquire the will, the insistence? These questions are in addition to the one of her sheer ability. She might have loved nature just as much and painted badly. In the play/film *Amadeus*, Peter Shaffer raised the subject of divine injustice. Why, the serious Salieri broods, does he have less talent than the comparatively frisky Mozart? Here we are left wondering how, fundamentally, Séraphine happened. The disposition of talent is, as it often is, a bit eerie.

The Chinese documentary *24 City* is about Chinese transition. The director Jia Zhang-ke, who won a Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival with an earlier film, is following what has almost become a pattern. Several Chinese directors who have had success feel the need to say something in some way about the country that fostered them. Some of them slipped into prosey servility. But Jia's documentary is the work of a sophisticated artist.

The place is Chengdu, another of those Chinese cities with a multi-million population that crowd the country and that most of us have never heard of. A large factory that had manufactured aviation engines has closed. On the site a giant housing project is being built. Jia wants to counterpoint two themes: the idea of progress and the fact that the old factory meant something in personal terms to its workers. It was not only the place where they worked: it was the organizing center of their lives—in habits, relations, ambitions. Thus, in two contrasting ways, Jia is celebrating his country. Not only is it progressive, he implies, but the way it uses working people doesn't stunt them, it cultivates them as—yes, fellow skeptics—individuals.

China, as it wills, educates and, at least in some degree, empowers film-makers. The very first shots of the huge empty factory tell us that Jia is imaginative, perhaps an outright romantic. He makes us think of caverns, of immense enclosed space, of a place that harbored years of people's lives, of labor done here, of design, rewards, disappointments. Jia converts emptiness into history.

This transmutation is helped by interviews. (He punctuates all these interviews with an occasional blip of black screen—not for emphasis or time lapse, just as a sort of stylistic dash.) Five former workers in the plant speak of their pasts in and around it, and all of them are interesting as people holding forth their lives to us in trust. But there are three other interviews that have caused, rightly, some fuss. They are fictional and are spoken by actors, well known to the Chinese audience, who pretend to be workers like the others. One of them, Joan Chen, is somewhat familiar in the United States.

Jia says that he wanted to integrate documentary and fiction "because this seemed to me the best way of representing the last half-century of Chinese history." Though this is more valid than he can mean, his own reasons do not become clear. Further, Jia says that "history is always a blend of facts and imagination." This is often true when the historian is dealing with the past; but with the present, or the relative present, his statement seems a mere excuse to add unusual touches to his film. (Like those black blips.) For the interview with Chen, he even has her seated in front of a large mirror so that we get a symbolic double image—the actress and the person she is pretending to be. If that isn't enough, he also finds a way to include a clip from one of Chen's films.

Admittedly he has succeeded, with his gimmicks, in making *24 City* unique. Without those gimmicks, however, his picture would have been even more distinguished. Still, China, so often ominous, is a dizzyingly interesting country—more than a country, a large chunk of the world—and Jia's documentary, despite its trickery, deploys its prodigious contradictions. ◆

Mark Mazower
THE EVIL THAT MEN DO

ARMENIAN GOLGOTHA: A MEMOIR OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE, 1915–1918
By Grigoris Balakian, translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag
(Knopf, 509 pp., $35)

SORROWFUL SHORES: VIOLENCE, ETHNICITY, AND THE END OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1912–1923
By Ryan Gingeras
(Oxford University Press, 272 pp., $99)

MY GRANDMOTHER: A MEMOIR
By Fethiye Çetin
(Verso, 114 pp., $21.95)

On the morning of March 15, 1921, a thick-set man wearing a heavy overcoat was walking down Hardenbergstrasse in the Berlin suburb of Charlottenburg when he was shot at point-blank range in the back of the head, and died immediately in a bloody heap on the sidewalk. His assailant, a much younger and thinner man, made a halfhearted effort to run away but was almost immediately grabbed by several passersby. "He was a foreigner," the gunman was reported as saying, in accented German. "I am a foreigner too. There is no loss."

The victim turned out to be Talaat Pasha, the erstwhile Interior Minister of the Ottoman Empire and a key member of the ruling wartime triumvirate of the nationalist Committee of Union and Progress party. His assassin was a young Armenian named Soghomon Tehlirian. At his subsequent trial, lawyers, psychiatric experts, policemen, and jurors tried to get their heads around what had prompted his crime. That something terrible had happened to the Armenians during the recent war in Anatolia they knew. Tehlirian was a polite and musically minded young man who made a good impression on a string of landladies. In court he described the killing of his family, and his own survival—and said that it was his mother's appearance to him in visions that had driven him to his act of revenge. Johannes Lepsius, the German expert on the Armenian question, gave the court a potted summary of what had transpired in wartime Anatolia, but the most gripping testimony came from an unknown Armenian cleric who had travelled from Manchester to testify on Tehlirian's behalf. He was Bishop Grigoris Balakian,

Mark Mazower is a professor of history at Columbia University and the author most recently of Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe (Penguin).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one of several witnesses called by the defense. In what was perhaps the high point of the trial, he outlined in rusty but effective German the gripping story of his own deportation and survival.

Tehlirian himself was acquitted of murder, rather sensationally, and lived another four decades, until he died in San Francisco in 1960. After the trial ended, conspiracy theories about its outcome flourished. Many people believed that Tehlirian was by no means as confused or as innocent as he had made out; that he had in fact been working variously for British or Russian intelligence, or carrying out orders as part of a campaign by Armenian revolutionaries to target those they held responsible for the wartime extermination. Meanwhile Balakian slipped back into diasporic obscurity, returning to his pastoral duties in Lancashire before becoming bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church in southern France, where he died in 1934. A much-expanded version of the story that he related at Tehlirian's trial was published in Armenian the year after the trial.

But few outside the Armenian community knew about this remarkable wartime memoir, which Balakian had begun writing virtually as soon as he had managed to return home to Constantinople—disguised as a German soldier—in the late autumn of 1918. Now it is at last available in English, in a fluent and readable rendering, and it takes its place as one of the key first-hand sources for understanding the Armenian genocide. Fueled by the anger of the survivor, the strategic vision of a spiritual leader, and the intellectual's desire to understand, *Armenian Golgotha* provides a more gripping and more harrowing account of the tragedy than any I have read. It is a powerful and important book.

Born in the Anatolian town of Tokat in 1876, Balakian had studied engineering for a year in Germany before becoming a priest, working on diplomatic missions for the Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul. When World War I broke out, he was in Berlin studying theology, but returned to the imperial capital a few weeks later because he wanted to witness what he believed would be the collapse of the Ottoman regime. Instead, the following April, he was arrested in a round-up of Armenian notables. This decapitation of the capital's Armenian intellectual, commercial, and political leadership marked the onset of a campaign of systematic murder.

Through the spring, summer, and autumn of 1915, while Balakian himself suffered the uncertainties of internal exile in the small central Anatolian town of Chankiri, a campaign of despoliation, deportation, and massacre unfolded. In May a new law was passed in Constantinople permitting Armenians to be forcibly deported. The following September an expropriation law regularized the seizure of their property. In the intervening months, hundreds of thousands of people were made to leave their homes. They were either killed or allowed to starve on forced marches across Anatolia toward the Syrian desert town of Der Zor in the south. Estimates of the eventual death toll, which are necessarily imprecise, range from 800,000 to 1.5 million people.

By early 1916, the rapidly dwindling band of political detainees in the town of Chankiri had a good idea of what awaited them if they left: they would be murdered just outside the town, as happened to many of their comrades, or attacked by roving bands further along the roads; or they would die of exhaustion and starvation. The odds of them reaching Syria seemed remote, especially if they had to walk for weeks across the windswept wintry plateaus of Anatolia. When the deportation order came through, Balakian assumed command of the deportees: taking the heart-wrenching decision to leave the women and children behind, he headed a group of some fifty men as it made its way south across the mountains. Over the next five weeks, some on horseback and others on foot, they were able to carry the gold and other valuables that kept them alive. Bribing the soldiers who accompanied them saved them from the human vultures that gathered around them, and gained them rations and fresh horses.

Balakian is unsparing about the impact of this traumatic journey on his companions and himself, but his vivid portraits of the Turks whom they encountered are what linger in the memory. Their lord and master for part of the journey, Captain Shukry, an elderly police captain, confided to Balakian—with no sense of shame—the full scale of the killings, noting that in order to save bullets in wartime it had been necessary to use a variety of cheaper implements to get the job done. There were some Turks who manifested their displeasure at the unfolding crime—an elderly village woman loudly cursed their police escort as they passed by; the governor of Chankiri and other officials made their disapproval clear, and indeed risked their careers to block the deportations. But many civilians, gendarmes, and state officials participated in the atrocity with enthusiasm. There is one unforgettable and terrifying scene in Balakian's memoir in which hundreds of villagers surround the caravan on a remote hillside three days' march out of Yozgut and prepare to fall on their prey, until more gold changes hands and Captain Shukry drives them off by the simple expedient of shooting their leaders dead.

As the bedraggled deportees made their way south through the snow and mud toward Cilicia and the Mediterranean coast, they passed fields littered with decomposing bodies and skulls, and once flourishing Armenian towns that now contained only a few elderly women. The war brought starvation and

An Armenian woman strokes a dead child outside of Aleppo, 1915

COURTESY ALFRED A. KNOPF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poverty to Anatolia, as it did to many other parts of the war's afflicted regions; but the genocide made things far worse. Some peasants grumbled that while the politicians of the wartime Unionist regime were getting rich in the towns, they faced soaring bread prices.

In Cilicia spring came, and the Armenian refugees began for the first time to encounter travelers on the empty roads—mostly camel drivers with oranges from the coast. And when they reached the railway, their prospects changed. Balakian struck a deal with the authorities to allow the wealthier deportees to travel to Aleppo by train. But realizing the grim fate that awaited them in the Syrian deserts of Der Zor, he resolved to escape. It was not only his knowledge of German that saved him, it was the railway itself.

For most of us, the Berlin-to-Baghdad railway is little more than a slogan. Balakian's memoir demonstrates its centrality both to the war in the Middle East and to the Armenian experience. Desperate to tunnel through the Cilician mountains in order to open up the bottleneck that slowed down the Ottoman and German war effort in the Arab provinces, German railway engineers insisted on using Armenian labor as long as possible, even as hundreds of thousands of Armenians were being driven south past their very eyes. The result was that anyone working on a relatively small stretch of line between the cities of Adana and Aleppo had an unrivalled vantage point from which to witness the Armenian tragedy, and even, if he or she was courageous enough, to help: German officers and missionary nurses, Swiss engineers, Ottoman dignitaries, and Armenian stationmasters could not miss seeing the vast agglomerations of destitute and starving refugees that gathered for the final leg of deportation.

For a resourceful and lucky few, such as Balakian, the railway promised salvation, and sympathetic German officials helped him to survive for more than a year. In the autumn of 1918, as the war approached its end, he returned by train—in the company of two German soldiers—to Istanbul, having already decided to compose a written record of what he had seen and heard. Armenian hopes of independent statehood were high at the Paris Peace conference, since President Wilson's sympathy for their plight was well-known. At the same time, a court martial was being prepared under British auspices for those who had perpetrated the killings, even though Talaat and the other ringleaders had already fled abroad on a German submarine. There were thus urgent political reasons for Balakian to record his impressions and his understandings of the Armenian tragedy.

In view of Balakian's obvious sympathy for the Armenian national cause, and his desire to serve it, can we take his *Armenian Golgotha* as a reliable historical document? After all, it was written after the events that it describes, giving the particulars of conversations that had taken place at least two years earlier. Moreover, it was clearly part of an indictment of the Ottoman regime that was intended to support demands for a new Armenian nation-state. And more technically, as Peter Balakian, its editor and co-translator, and the author's great-nephew, points out, this translation itself has involved a considerable degree of Englishing of the text, which has produced a version different in intensity if not in basic detail from the original.

Yet none of this, not even the few somewhat disconcerting errors of detail (the date of Tehlirian's trial is off by a year), should detract from the lacerating documentary impact of this work. It is a perfectly credible testimony to man's inhumanity to man. What should be borne in mind, rather, are the intrinsic shortcomings of any humanitarian survivor narrative. For there is a basic difficulty with this powerful genre that must be confronted by any thoughtful reader. Firsthand tales of suffering bring us immediately into the emotional world of the victim, but they also suffer from severe explanatory limitations. Balakian may speculate about what drove the Ottoman Unionist leadership, but he is making inferences only from the few documents that he was shown, or from his own conversations with Turkish officials.

Yet at the same time—and this is one of the things that make this memoir so rich—Balakian hints at elements of the story that a broader, less personal, and more analytical approach could later flesh out: the existence of real resistance inside the Ottoman bureaucracy to the killing policy; the connection between it and events on the Russian front; the collapse of the wartime domestic economy; the corruption that swept through Unionist ranks; and above all the impact of the much larger complex of refugee movements across Anatolia, of which the Armenians were just one part. This is not to say that the current government of Turkey is right in implicitly equating what happened to the Armenians with the plight of Muslim refugees who had fled the Russians. On the contrary: only the former were faced with a systematic government policy of mass death. But it is true that we will not understand what happened to the Armenians unless we see what happened to them in the wider context of the war.

It is worth remembering that there were good reasons for anxiety on the part of the Ottoman elite. Defeat in the Balkan Wars had recently ended Ottoman power in Europe, and Muslims had been driven from their homes or massacred in 1912, just as they had been earlier in 1877 and, in the Russian Caucasus, in the 1860s. Their suffering on those occasions had aroused little international interest. When the Turkish writer Halide Edib argued with Talaat during the war about his fanaticism on the Armenian issue, he justified his policy to her on the grounds that "there was an equal number of Turks and Moslems massacred during the Balkan war yet the world kept a criminal silence." This was not true quantitatively, to be sure; but still it is a useful reminder of the sense of existential crisis that hung over the Committee of Union and Progress leadership. When it seized power in the Young Turk revolution of 1908, the CUP was hailed as a partner by Armenian, Arab, Greek, and other Ottoman ethnic minority parties. But by the time it returned to power in another coup—in January, 1913—it had emerged as the spearhead of a new and intransigent strain of Turkish nationalism. To make matters worse, having plunged the country into World War I, against the wishes of a large proportion of the population, this same Unionist leadership faced defeat after defeat in early 1915, the disintegration of Minister of War Enver's Third Army and the collapse of his Russian dreams in the East, and the very real likelihood of a British naval assault on Constantinople. By the spring of 1915, Talaat and the other members of the triumvirate that ruled the empire faced the prospect of total collapse.

They had good reason to fear the Armenians in particular. For thanks to their Russian backers, the Armenians had—on the eve of the war—got the Powers to pressure the Ottomans to concede administrative reforms in eastern Anatolia; and it did not take a prophet to see that these could have the same disintegrative impact on Ottoman rule as an earlier set of reforms in Macedonia had done. Rumors—which were probably correct—that a small number of Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman ranks had deserted to the Russians in early 1915 provided the catalyst for what followed. In short order, the remaining

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Armenian men in the army were disarmed and formed into labor battalions, and when they resisted they were massacred. This was the genesis of the bloodletting around Lake Van that preceded Balakian's arrest by only a few days. By late April, it seems that the CUP leadership had moved swiftly to generalize the deportation policy and transform it into a campaign to eliminate the Armenians one way or another as a political factor in the future of Anatolia.

It helps to distinguish the situation in eastern Anatolia—the dynamo in the whole killing process—from that further west. The war was coming close to Lake Van by the end of 1914, and Armenian volunteers were forming units in southern Russia and western Iran in order to push the Ottomans back as soon as the melting snows allowed. By the summer of 1915, when deportations and massacres swept across western and central Anatolia, the Russians had occupied much of the Van region and Armenian bands were wreaking their bloody revenge on Muslims. Had sympathizers for the Armenian case, in their campaign to have these events recognized as a genocide, not been so caught up in the moralizing logic of advocacy, they might have acknowledged how, in the to and fro of the war in the East, huge numbers of Muslims were also massacred or expelled from their homes. Some of these refugees from the Russian army were glimpsed by Balakian, who makes the same comment on them as Halide Edib did: in their wretchedness and hopelessness, they appeared indistinguishable from the Armenians themselves.

Disease and starvation indeed stalked all the refugees, and many of them, from all ethnic groups, fell prey to brigands and robbers. But only the Armenians were systematically killed. As we know from the memoirs of the Venezuelan mercenary Rafael de Nogales, who served the Ottomans in eastern Anatolia, orders to exterminate all Armenian males aged twelve and above had already been issued by the governor-general of Van province in April 1915.

But what did such decrees really mean, and what prompted them? Some answers to such questions are provided by a riveting new study by Ryan Gingeras on the impact of the war in western Anatolia, which gives us what we have lacked until now—an eye-opening insight into how decisions taken by a few men in the Ottoman capital were translated into killing on the ground. Gingeras's impressive book illuminates this in unprecedented detail—and, what is more, it does so on the basis of the Ottoman archives.

Not solely or even directly concerned with the Armenians, Gingeras makes at least two important contributions. First, he demonstrates that just as the Holocaust grew out of Nazi population engineering, so the Anatolian killings grew out of the CUP's much broader and more intricate demographic ambitions. Ruthless purifiers of the Ottoman heartland, they bludgeoned their way toward a definition of Turkish ethnicity by targeting suspect ethnic groups of all kinds, Muslim as well as Christian. Defined as a dire security threat, the Armenians came off worst; but most readers will be surprised to learn that Muslim Albanians and Circassians were also targeted for deportation and surveillance by the CUP leadership. Any concentration of "suspicious elements" aroused the concern of the population engineers in Istanbul, and Albanian gangsters and Circassian bandits appeared almost as threatening as Armenian merchants and Greek shopkeepers. Some historians reckon that the security issue can be overplayed. They point out that while Habsburgs and Romanovs were also anxious about wartime security and deported populations of suspect allegiance from border areas, they did not murder them en masse. This is certainly true, but it also remains the case that few if any of the protagonists in the war faced a geopolitical threat of the magnitude confronting the Ottoman Empire.

The other thing that distinguished the Ottoman Unionist leadership from the elites running other wartime empires was the character of the state over which they presided, and the way its power was wielded in the provinces. It is here that Gingeras makes his second, and most essential, contribution. By-passing the regular institutions of the Ottoman state, Talaat ran his murderous deportation policy through networks of Party administrators, with the muscle provided by local men of violence. Many of the latter were members of the CUP's recently formed paramilitary Special Organization, one of whose main functions was to run the deportation program in conjunction with a new directorate for the settlement of tribes and immigrants. What Gingeras gives us is not the work of the directorate's ethnographers and refugee resettlement planners (other scholars are working on them), but the paramilitaries and the tribal leaders, many of them Circassian—more than two million Circassians had fled the Russians in the Caucasus over the preceding half-century—whose bands of toughs, enforcers, and ex-criminals they deployed for their political patrons. In *Sorrowful Shores*, those threatening bandits who lurked in the hills around Balakian and his fellow deportees are given an identity and a life of their own, and their connections to the district governors, town mayors, and local Unionist party leaders are made clear.

None of this, of course, is to deny the singularity of what happened to the Armenians; but it does help to explain it. We can trace the connections between the existential crisis of the Ottoman state,

Pleasure Harvest

When she took a position in a distant city he knew
He could not follow and in the months afterwards he built
Them a home where she was still with him even
Though they never lived together. Mornings they made coffee
In this kitchen, washed the berries, read books on the long couch,
Their legs touching in some configuration, and one would interrupt
The other's reading to make some observation on the art
They both practiced. Afternoons he went to work but even
Then, talking in a meeting or with colleagues in the hallway,
He pictured her and how she and he were writing in bed
Back to back on their laptops. Nights were more difficult
When she curled beside him, a beautiful question
No longer to be answered. So why not try to sing
The pleasures of his real leaky house, the unruly yard,
His arguing children, the undisciplined dog, his ongoing work,
And she who is brilliant now far outside his door? Everything
He has known was imperfect. What else was there for him but this?

STUART DISCHELL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the collapse of the Eastern Front, and the targeting of Armenians as security threats and scapegoats. In an unpopular war, the destruction of the Armenians promised loot and other economic benefits. But it also fit into the much broader and more generalized policies of deportation and killing that the CUP leadership developed with extraordinary speed under the cover of war, for the sake of a still undefined national purity. And as Gingeras demonstrates, the same ideas were continued by Mustafa Kemal and his lieutenants after 1918—only now they were turned against the Kurds and the Circassians as well. In the decades that followed, the Kemalist myth of Turkish national unity became the ideological means by which the extraordinary ethnic heterogeneity of the land they had inherited and done their best to eliminate could be quietly forgotten.

The Tehlirian trial in 1921 brought some prominence not only to Grigoris Balakian. It also inspired a young Jewish student named Rafael Lemkin to launch a lifelong struggle for the recognition of genocide as a crime in international law. Lemkin was twenty-one years old and a student of linguistics in Lvov in Poland when he read about the Tehlirian trial. In an unpublished memoir, written many years later, he recalled asking his professor: "It is a crime for Tehlirian to kill a man, but it is not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men? This is most inconsistent." And he added: "Sovereignty cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of innocent people."

Lemkin went on to coin the term "genocide," and his obsessive campaign to have it properly identified and outlawed eventually achieved victory in 1948, in the shape of the Genocide Convention. Owing to Lemkin, the spotlight of publicity has since been shone on some acts of state-sanctioned mass murder and other less drastic forms of minority persecution—but only fitfully, and when political circumstances have permitted or facilitated it. The case of the mass murder of the Armenians has emerged, especially since the Armenian diaspora's turn from terrorism to political lobbying in the 1980s, as an exemplary case of the advantages and the disadvantages of asking politicians to decide on when an atrocity counts as a genocide. President Obama's awkward fence-straddling formulations during his recent visit to Turkey illustrated once again the lamentably political character of our discourse on genocide. During the presidential campaign, Obama was outspokenly sympathetic to the Armenian position about what actually happened in 1915. But in the White House the demands of American-Turkish relations—and no less importantly, helping along the current rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia—have resulted in some backpedaling. In his remarks in Turkey, Obama carefully avoided any mention of the word "genocide."

The official Turkish response was also revealing. Despite Obama's verbal footwork, the Turkish government objected to his manifest sympathy for the Armenian victims. Standing beside him, President Gul of Turkey insisted on a different emphasis: "We share the sorrow of all those who lost their lives. But we have to remember that the Muslim population also suffered greatly at the same time." As should be clear from what I have written above, this is simultaneously reasonable and unreasonable. It is unreasonable, because the two cases, Armenian and "Muslim," were not fundamentally the same (not to mention the fact that the latter scarcely makes sense as a historical category in this context). But it is reasonable, because the black-and-white logic of those demanding the recognition of the genocide has indeed been blind to the larger and more ambiguous picture, in which large numbers of Muslims were also deported, expelled, and killed, some by Russian or Armenian units, others by the Ottomans themselves. A genocide was indeed perpetrated against the Armenians, but no single group can claim a monopoly of virtue. More crucially, the demand for genocide "recognition," whatever its ethical merits, has the effect of reducing to a struggle between two sides—Turks/Muslims and Armenians—a conflict that in fact caught up far more peoples—Greeks, Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, Assyrian Christians, Albanians—in its murderous coils.

In fact, one is inclined to agree with President Gul that the clarification and interpretation of the complexities of the historical record is a matter best kept out of the hands of politicians. After all, the most important contributions to our rapidly developing historical understanding of what happened in Anatolia in 1915–1916 do not come from official circles, nor from officially approved historians, but from more independently minded academics, writers, and journalists. Gingeras's book illustrates how much is now being gleaned by enterprising younger scholars from the Turkish archives (which are more accessible now than several major state archives in France and Italy). And even as much of Turkish public opinion solidifies behind the old nationalist nostrums, drummed into the public consciousness from school onward, dissenters are raising their voices. In the wake of the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink at the end of 2007, a petition apologizing for the crimes committed against the Armenians in 1915 gathered large numbers of signatories. And new works of scholarship and historical memory are currently being published in Turkey that pull the subject of wartime killing away from the grand narratives of empires, nations, and international geopolitics, and instead explore its impact on the private life of contemporary Turkey. An outstanding example of such a work is the recently published book written by Hrant Dink's lawyer, Fethiye Çetin.

Anatolia was an ethnic kaleidoscope of bewildering complexity, and despite the Kemalist longing for national purity, not even genocide could eradicate this diversity. Indeed, Armenians continued to shape modern Turkey even after most of them were killed or expelled. This legacy is the subject of Çetin's haunting family memoir. I find it hard to praise this book too highly. Written with exemplary restraint and with deep emotion, it describes two interlocking stories—that of the author's grandmother, a pious Muslim woman living her entire life in a small Anatolian town, and that of the author herself, and her coming to terms with her grandmother's secret. The secret was that her grandmother's real name was not Seher but Heranus Gadaryan—that is, she had not been born a Muslim at all, but was in reality an Armenian girl seized, and saved, by a Turkish gendarme during the massacre of her family, and brought up by him as his own daughter.

In a most delicate fashion, Çetin conveys the life of the Gadaryans before emigration and the war left most of them

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/PERSONAL ASSISTANT

New York City—Highly intelligent, resourceful individuals with exceptional communication skills sought to undertake research projects and administrative tasks for one of Wall Street's most successful entrepreneurs. We welcome applications from writers, musicians, artists, or others who may be pursuing other professional goals in the balance of their time. $90-110k/yr to start (depending on qualifications). Resume to: gen8R@spsfind.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

either dead or far afield. She has even uncovered a letter written by the young Heranus before the war to her father and uncles in America. But she also conveys the sequel—the humdrum normality of provincial life in a small Turkish town as it was lived by Heranus after she became Seher, the industrious and canny wife of a factory worker and the beloved mother and grandmother of a growing clan whom she fed, cared for, and protected until she was very old. It was only in 1975, when she took the decision to confide in her young granddaughter that she still had relatives in America, that bit by bit her hidden past emerged. Çetin took it upon herself to try to trace this family, and eventually she succeeded.

Among its other virtues, this book reminds us that history is never just history—that traces of the crime linger on in unexpected ways, some negative, others positive, over the generations into the present. One may choose—as many nationalists inside and outside Turkey do—to ignore these uncomfortable truths, or one may agree to face them. But it is surely a heartening sign that some people are starting to see the hidden world of the Armenians, and the other minorities that perished, as a source of strength, not shame. ◆

Adam Kirsch
THE BINDING OF ISAAC

ROSENFELD'S LIVES: FAME, OBLIVION, AND THE FURIES OF WRITING
By Steven J. Zipperstein
(Yale University Press, 274 pp., $27.50)

"Zetland: By a Character Witness" may not be the best fifteen pages that Saul Bellow wrote, but it is surely the most concentratedly, turbulently Bellovian. "Yes, I knew the guy," the story begins. "We were boys in Chicago. He was wonderful." Instantly the reader is plunged into an accelerated tour of all of Bellow's great themes and tropes: Chicago's strength and ugliness; the bookishness and idealism of first-generation American Jewish boys; the love and oppression of the Jewish family; the tragicomic clash of intellect and sex. We see Zetland grow in a few pages from a precocious fourteen-year-old, reciting Keats on a boat in the public lagoon, to a young husband, delighting in his wife and sex and the world, and inspired by *Moby-Dick* to become a great novelist: "There really is no human life without this poetry." Then Bellow cuts the story short, as if unwilling to show us what the future has in store.

Whenever Bellow maneuvered his alter egos—Moses Herzog, Charlie Citrine—through these same obsessions, he never pretended to innocence. Bellow's heroes are smart, but they are prey to anger and resentment, they demand too much, they are thwarted and mocked by the world. But not Zetland, because Zetland was not conceived as another version of his creator. He is, as initiated readers have long known, Isaac Rosenfeld, Bellow's childhood friend and literary rival, whose disappointing career and premature death, at the age of thirty-eight in 1956, threw Bellow's own never-ending triumphs into relief. Having decisively outdone his old friend, in survival and in glory, Bellow preserved his memory with a kind of superstitious piety. When he won the Nobel Prize in 1976, he told a friend, "It should have been Isaac." His loving, mourning remark becomes even more touching when we learn, in Steven Zipperstein's new quasi-biography *Rosenfeld's Lives*, that in the early 1950s Rosenfeld had brushed off a fawning magazine profile of Truman Capote with the words, "No matter, someday Saul or I will win the Nobel Prize."

But this fraternal ambition seemed to have been betrayed by the antithetical verdicts that life handed down to the two friends. In "Zetland," as the subtitle implies, Bellow writes as though arguing for an appeal in Rosenfeld's case, insisting almost frantically on Zetland's purity and loveliness so as to convince the world to remember him. Already as a teenager, we are told, Zetland patterned himself after Tolstoy, whose portrait hung in the window of a vegetarian restaurant in Chicago: "Great men repudiated the triviality of ordinary and merely human things, including what was merely human in themselves. What was a nose? Cartilage. A beard? Cellulose. A count? A caste figure, a thing produced by epochs of oppression. Only Love, Nature and God are good and great."

Here the reader can already glimpse a fateful divergence between Zetland and his eulogist. Zetland soars above the human plane, to an ideal realm where the spirit is unburdened by things like noses and beards. Bellow, by contrast, is a great physiognomist. He believes that the external discloses the internal—that the spirit is best glimpsed in just those kinds of bodily details. Not even in his later years, when he became enamored of the transcendentalism of Owen Barfield and the mysticism of Rudolf Steiner, did Bellow ever lose his artistic faith in the actual and the concrete. He practices this art on Zetland himself in the first lines of the story: "He had full lips and big boyish teeth, widely spaced. Sandy hair, combed straight back, exposed a large forehead. The skin of his round face often looked tight." It is almost exactly the same as the description that begins his memorial essay on Rosenfeld, which was published in 1962 as the foreword to *An Age of Enormity*, a collection of Rosenfeld's writings. There Bellow opens not with Rosenfeld's achievements, or their personal relationship, but simply with his face and his body: "Isaac had a round face and yellowish-brown hair which he combed straight back.... He had a short broad figure. His chest was large." There is something devout, even necromantic, about such Bellovian descriptions, as though summoning the body was the first step in resurrecting the soul.

In a sense, then, "Zetland" does not just honor Rosenfeld. It also continues the quarrel that the two friends had in life about the place of spirit and matter, soul and body, abstract and concrete. "In one-hundred-percent-industrial contemporary Chicago," Bellow writes, "where shadows of loveliness were lacking, a flat wheel of land meeting a flat wheel of fresh water, intelligent boys like Zet, though fond of the world, too, were not long detained by surface phenomena." Zetland's genius is for ideas and abstractions and essences. We see him summarizing the evolution of life on earth and predicting the future of society: "to be an intellectual was the next stage of human development, the historical fate of mankind, if you prefer."

But Bellow's prose caresses precisely those unlovely urban surfaces that Zetland impatiently dismissed, and in so doing it achieves the transcendence that Zetland only talks about. No doubt this is why Bellow sets himself the challenge of transfiguring even the most sordid and banal scenes, as when he describes Zetland's first New York apartment: "You could hear the largo of the drain as you drank your coffee, or watch the cockroaches come and go about the cupboards.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The toaster spring was tight. It snapped out the bread. Sometimes a toasted cockroach was flung out." And here is Zetland sick on the toilet: "The cloaca was there, the nausea, and also the coziness of bowel smells going back to childhood, the old brown colors. And the dismay and sweetness of ragged coughing and the tropical swampiness of the fever. But there also rose up the seas. Straight through the air shaft, west, and turn left at the Hudson. The Atlantic was there."

Is there a human price to be paid for this kind of mastery? Bellow acknowledges that there is, when he contrasts Zetland's sensitivity with his own hardness. "His cat had a miscarriage," Bellow writes, "and he wept about that, too, because the mother cat was grieving. I flushed the stillborn cats down the boardless grimy toilet in the cellar." It is an example of their contrasting temperaments: "We decided that we were the tender-minded and tough-minded of William James, respectively." Yet Bellow insists that it takes a tough mind to sustain the novelist's open eyes: "James had said that to know everything that happened in one city on a single day would crush the toughest mind. No one could be as tough as he needed to be." And the very fact that it is Bellow writing about Rosenfeld, not the other way around, proves him right. Zetland is introspective, lovable, and a failure, while Bellow is as tough as he needs to be, and therefore great.

"While writing this book, I often found it impossible to picture Rosenfeld without thinking of Bellow's Rosenfeld," Zipperstein remarks, and it could hardly have been otherwise. Rosenfeld's work, to be sure, is not negligible. His autobiographical novel, *Passage from Home,* was acclaimed by Irving Howe and others when it appeared in 1946, and it remains a significant document of the American Jewish experience. He published several major essays—on Yiddish writers, the Holocaust, the psychology of Gandhi—that rank among the lasting work of the New York intellectuals. Yet there is finally no disagreeing with Howe's verdict in his memoir, *A Margin of Hope,* that Rosenfeld "never quite found the medium, in either fiction or essay, to release his gift."

Reading the essays and the stories collected in *Preserving the Hunger: An Isaac Rosenfeld Reader*, a big anthology edited by Mark Schechner, leaves no doubt that Rosenfeld had an original and appealing mind. But it is the mind behind the writing, not the writing itself, that one remembers. In the 1940s and 1950s, Rosenfeld was thinking passionately about important questions—including, as Zipperstein emphasizes, the future of the Jews after the Holocaust, at a time when explicitly Jewish matters made most of the New York intellectuals distinctly uncomfortable. Rosenfeld pondered the meanings of the Holocaust before it was "the Holocaust." It set him thinking about psychology, about the human potential for evil and whether social institutions could abolish it, in ways that might have become very fruitful. But his ideas remained largely undeveloped, except in a handful of book reviews; and Rosenfeld did not have Trilling's gift for making literary criticism a vehicle for universal reflection.

Nor, on the other hand, did he have anything like Bellow's talent for fiction. It is an unfair standard of comparison, of course (and it was unfair of Bellow to suggest it in 1976). Perhaps a more useful contrast is with Delmore Schwartz, whose fiction has a better claim than Rosenfeld's to the (already qualified) praise that Zipperstein awards *Passage from Home*: "before Philip Roth's stories and novels, this was the most psychologically probing fictional analysis in English of the making of a Jewish intellectual." When, in "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," Schwartz imagined himself watching—and futilely attempting to stop—his parents' courtship on a movie screen, he fused autobiography with a distinctively American surrealism.

Rosenfeld's fiction shares those same impulses, but it does not manage to integrate them. *Passage from Home* dissipates the momentum of its coming-of-age story with damagingly self-conscious psychological analyses. The novel tells the story of the teenaged Bernard Miller, Rosenfeld's alter ego: his rebellion against his unappeasable, oppressive father, and his initiation into the adult world by observing the destructive love affair between his aunt Minna and Willy, a seductive Gentile interloper in an otherwise Jewish milieu. When Bernard runs away from home to stay with Minna and Willy, he is given a cot in the kitchen to sleep on, and finds to his excitement and disgust that he can hear the couple making love in the next room. He wakes up the next morning to discover that his cot is infested with bedbugs: the bed has been transformed by sexuality from a place of rest to a place of squalor and torment.

As if the symbolism were not blatant enough, Bernard goes on to make it explicit: "The infested cot made me revise my private symbolism of reference to Minna's life. . . . This evidence, this ruin, implicated her in a history of spoliation." This kind of overt psychological reflection comes to seem like a sign not just of Bernard's adolescent self-consciousness, but also of Rosenfeld's lack of trust in himself and the reader—as though the novel had to deliver itself pre-interpreted. (Just before making a shy pass at Minna, Bernard lights a fire in her fireplace: "I had never ventured to touch Minna's fireplace before.") This was the defect that Alfred Kazin objected to in a letter to Rosenfeld that Zipperstein prints in full: "you allow your total realization, your eloquence, your ability to turn experiences into perception, to do your novelist's work for you."

Rosenfeld recognized this shortcoming, and thought that he could find a remedy in the techniques of Kafka. Writing about Kafka in 1947, the year after *Passage from Home* appeared, he observed that "his symbols must be understood to approach, rather than depart from, and to include, rather than exclude, the whole range of meaning that encloses an object." Kafka presents his symbols as if they were objects, confidently and reticently, where Rosenfeld had all too deliberately turned his objects into symbols. Yet when Rosenfeld attempted to emulate that boldness in his own short stories, he usually ended up simply imitating Kafka. His story "Red Wolf," narrated by a dog in some sort of animal-research facility, takes over the premise of "Investigations of a Dog." "The Party," a satire on the dreariness of Communist Party work, takes an unexpected swerve into a pastiche of "Josephine the Singer." Rosenfeld even wrote a novella with the slavishly Kafkaesque title "The Colony," and won a Guggenheim to expand it into a novel; but the finished manuscript found no publisher. His emulation became something of a joke: "There lives the Jewish Kafka," William Barrett quipped when pointing out Rosenfeld's apartment on Barrow Street in the Village.

Rosenfeld's failure to produce any writing commensurate with what everyone agreed was his genius leaves his biographer in a difficult position. "Literary biography is designed characteristically to provide signposts to achievement," Zipperstein observes. "On the whole, it begins and ends best with the texts it seeks to open up, expand,

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deepen, or at least better understand with the help of life experiences the biographer comes to know more about than the literary critic." But Zipperstein, who is not a literary critic but a historian of European Jewry, clearly came to feel that the paucity of Rosenfeld's work could not sustain a full-dress biography. He devotes the introduction of *Rosenfeld's Lives* to his own ambivalence about writing it: "This book has been a struggle to write." He explains that he began by producing a "more standard biography—more densely detailed and structured in a more strictly chronological way than it now is," only to recast it in its current form as a more episodic "reflection on a writer's sense of what it meant to be immersed in, and also deeply suspicious of, a life given over to books."

Rosenfeld's Lives moves not from year to year or event to event, but from text to text, and so it omits much of what a biography should contain. "Rosenfeld's was a miserable childhood," the first chapter begins, but on the next page Rosenfeld is already fourteen years old, producing his first published story, in Yiddish. We learn little about his childhood that could not be gleaned from his fiction and from Bellow's memoir. Nor does Zipperstein spend much time illuminating Rosenfeld's Chicago milieu, as if in the expectation that any reader of Rosenfeld would already be initiated into that world through Bellow's life and work. This kind of narrative skimpiness is partly a result of the passage of time—almost all the people who knew Rosenfeld are now dead, though some, including Bellow, were alive when Zipperstein started his research. Even so, the more conventional and thorough biography that Zipperstein began would have done more justice to Rosenfeld.

If there is too little of Rosenfeld's lives, there is too much of Zipperstein's lives: his experiences, his ruminations, his likes and dislikes. His introduction includes a long vignette of his interview with Rosenfeld's daughter-in-law Claire in her "emotionally taut apartment" in the Bronx, about which he adds: "Manhattan was only a few miles away but seemed distant, perilously so. A friend told me this was a neighborhood favored by low-level mafia types." We also hear about the author's private life during the writing of the book ("as I re-met and fell deeply in love with the woman who is now my wife"). He does not conceal his personal distaste for several of the people he interviewed for the book, including Lionel Abel ("old, frail, and uncommonly vain") and Alfred Kazin ("a man whose pettiness far outstripped that of nearly anyone in this clamped, envious circle"), judgments that would seem to require a greater personal acquaintance with their victims. And he concludes with the sentimental raising of Rosenfeld's ghost: "I see Rosenfeld now, in a book-filled study, old, and wise, and calm—finally…." These lapses from biographical rigor give Zipperstein's book an awkward, sometimes embarrassing feel.

The biggest problem with *Rosenfeld's Lives*, however, is that while Zipperstein bases his approach on the reading of texts, he only intermittently captures the inner dynamic that makes Rosenfeld an interesting writer despite, or because of, his shortcomings. Zipperstein does not seem terribly interested in the intellectual and political struggles that defined Rosenfeld's milieu. Thus, considering the importance of the Stalinist-Trotskyist split, at the University of Chicago no less than at City College, it seems insufficient for Zipperstein to sum it up by saying that Stalinists "viewed Trotsky as a dangerous extremist, even, as Stalin would insist, a spy."

If this is misleading, sometimes Zipperstein's paraphrase of Rosenfeld's letters is confusing, as in this passage: "'Our tradition,' declaimed Rosenfeld to Tarcov, 'is remarkably rich taking in a goodly segment of Modern Culture. Dali, Breton, Matisse, Picasso, Mann, Eliot, Huxley, Trotszy [sic] move across the pages of our history.' These men, numbering a dozen or so, had, as Rosenfeld insisted in the same letter, their own 'pantheon' (Farrell, Hook, Norman Thomas, John Dewey, and Irving Janis)." Read as it seems to require, this says that Picasso, Mann and Trotsky worshipped James T. Farrell and Irving Janis, which cannot be what Rosenfeld meant. What he did mean is hard to figure out.

A more important misunderstanding occurs when Zipperstein is discussing Rosenfeld's idealized view of childhood. "He reflected often on the end of childhood, the time before the anguish and distractions of sex gave way to consummation," Zipperstein writes. "As he saw it, spiritual aspirations were sharpest then, just before the onset of lust." But the journal entry that he goes on to quote says just the reverse, praising "the value repression must have had … the intensity and eagerness it produced, the overevaluation of knowledge—the political activity, recklessness—in a word, idealism." Rosenfeld is not nostalgic for the time before sex and lust. He is grateful precisely for the unhappiness of puberty, in which desire is first sublimated into "spiritual aspirations."

This is a crucial passage for understanding Rosenfeld, because it documents stirrings of rebellion against the flamboyant sexual-liberationist theories of Wilhelm Reich, which he had followed for much of the 1940s and 1950s. This becomes clear if you look at the full journal entry, included in *Preserving the Hunger*:

> The trouble with Paul Goodman, the anarcho-Reichians, the whole gang … they forget the value repression must have had in their own lives, the intensity & eagerness it produced, the overevaluation of knowledge—political activity, recklessness—in a word, idealism. It is always so in the adolescence of intellectuals. The best, the purest, the freest moments occur during the starvation-in-the-midst-of-plenty of the post-pubertal period. Surely, as we look back on our "wasted youth," our experience must tell us to be grateful. But no, the theory says otherwise.

What "the theory," the Reichian doctrine, said is of the first importance for grasping Rosenfeld and his thwartedness. As Zipperstein notes, all the memoirs of Rosenfeld by his fellow intellectuals mention his devotion to the bizarre psychoanalytic teachings of Reich, and in particular his homemade orgone box—the apparatus in which Reich instructed patients to sit in order to accumulate the cosmic orgone energy that fueled orgasms. "Belligerently sitting inside his orgone box," Kazin wrote in *New York Jew*, "daring philistines to laugh, Isaac nevertheless looked lost, as if he were waiting in his telephone booth for a call that was not coming through." William Phillips recalled that Rosenfeld even trusted to "a little pastoral orgone box to vitalize his vegetable garden … he kept the seeds in the orgone box before planting them, and he was sure that the orgone rays stimulated the growth of the vegetables."

How did Rosenfeld, who as a philosophy student had kindled to logical positivism, end up believing in such quackery? Zipperstein rightly notes that he was hardly alone. Bellow also went through a Reichian phase, and Zipperstein quotes James Baldwin on Reich's appeal to their disillusioned post-Marxist generation: "It seemed to me … that people turned from the idea of the world being made better through politics to the idea of the world being made better through psychic and sexual health like sinners coming down the aisle at a revival meeting." This was, in fact, an explicit part of Reich's appeal. The first edition of Reich's *Character Analysis* appeared in Germany in January

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1933, the month in which Hitler took power, and Reich's preface makes clear that he saw his psychoanalytic work as bound up with politics: "it is only a thorough turnover of social institutions and ideologies, a turnover that will be dependent upon the outcome of the political struggles of our century, which will create the preconditions for an extensive prophylaxis of neuroses."

Reichianism, then, seemed to offer a new channel for the energies that had been wasted in the Marxist struggles of the 1930s. Rosenfeld was particularly alert to that waste: his story "The Party" describes an American cadre's growing disillusion with his party cell, which culminates when the younger members start interrupting the leaders' platform speeches with a campaign of deliberate yawning. (Their strategy, Rosenfeld writes, was "'to bore from within'—miserable pun.") But what really seems to have made Rosenfeld place his social hope in Reichianism was the extermination of European Jewry, to which he reacted more quickly and more profoundly than most of the New York intellectuals. He came almost at once to the belief, which in time would become a truism of Holocaust discourse, that the extremity of the Nazi crimes against the Jews went beyond conventional categories of good and evil.

What must replace them, he wrote in *Partisan Review* in 1949, are the more fundamental forces of terror and joy: "The death of our old culture came about when the evil greater than evil occurred—which is the terror. The good greater than good does not yet exist on earth: it is joy, which wants eternity. Together with terror, joy must replace the old pair of opposites, the old limits, which are now surpassed." Only by transforming human character could the world be made safe from totalitarianism, in both its Nazi and Soviet varieties. Reviewing a book about the Soviet labor camps, Rosenfeld longed for "a politics in which such things as the Soviet Union not only do not occur, but are impossible. But this is as much as to say, a new humanity: a society and a human character structure, proof against outrage. Which is what was once meant by socialism."

That last sentence should have alerted Rosenfeld to the falsity of his premise: if the pursuit of a perfect society through socialism had issued in disaster, why should the pursuit of a perfect humanity through psychoanalysis end differently? Zipperstein writes that Rosenfeld admired "those rare souls … able to stay their doubts, to harness their neuroses and their damaged souls, to create some basic, credible political good." But while Rosenfeld was groping towards something like this wisdom in his last years, Zipperstein is wrong to suggest that "such themes" led him to his "long-standing preoccupation with Wilhelm Reich," since respect for the crooked timber of humanity is exactly what one does not find in Reich. The doctrines of Reich are conspicuously illiberal and irrational, and nowhere more so than in their insistence on the surrender of individual judgment—to the therapist in this case, as to the Party in the discipline of Marxism.

According to Reich, "character armor" is the psychic and physical rigidity that inhibits sexual pleasure, which Reichian therapy is designed to break down. But it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, reading Reich, that what he means by "character armor" is actually character itself. Any fixity in a person's values and perceptions—the very consistency by which we know our self as a self—is condemned by Reich as a pathological "hardening" of the psyche. "We often hear it said: 'That's simply the way I am.' The implication here is that the person concerned was born that way; he simply cannot behave differently—that's his character," Reich teaches. But the deliberately assaultive techniques of Reichian therapy are meant to annihilate "the way I am." "Eventually—it usually takes many months (in one case it took a year and a half)," Reich testifies, "the patient begins to buckle under the continual stressing of his emotional lameness and its causes."

If the rigid self is the source of all suffering, then the source of all health and happiness is the obliteration of self that, in Reich's view, we achieve in the moment of orgasm. Then "every form of reserve, holding back, and armoring is abandoned" and "all thought and fantasy activity cease. The organism is 'surrendered' in the purest sense of the word." The notion that the cessation of thought is the acme of human flourishing marks Reich's distance from Freud, whose disciple he once was.

But it also makes the allure of Reich to Rosenfeld a little more comprehensible. In "Zetland," Bellow suggests that Rosenfeld was raised by his domineering father to be all mind, no body: "Old Zet would be the *man* of the family and young Zet its *genius*. 'He wanted me to be a John Stuart Mill,' said Zet. 'Or some shrunken little Itzkowitz of a prodigy—Greek and calculus at the age of eight, damn him!'" As an adult, then, it is no wonder that Rosenfeld plunged into unintellectual life—into sexual experimentation—trying to restore the balance between his mind and his appetites. At the same time he came to associate Jewishness and the Jewish family with sexual repression, a theme that comes up again and again in his writing. "I could never form any connection between Jews and sex," he wrote in his journal.

In *Passage from Home*, in the scene where Bernard is illicitly lighting Minna's fireplace, he expands on the sexual symbolism this way:

> I had therefore come to identify the absence of a fireplace as a Jewish characteristic, of a kind with dietary restrictions on the mingling of meat and dairy products, or the taboo on pork. Since Jews did not bring fire into their homes, I thought it forbidden. Fire was the image of that raging, destructive spirit, found also in drunkenness, bloody meat not salted or soaked, life without prayer, the freedom of the world without God, against which we locked our doors.… But I love fire, and that I thought it forbidden only increased the beauty I saw in it.

This passage foreshadows what would become the greatest controversy of Rosenfeld's career: the publication, in *Commentary* in 1949, of his extraordinary essay "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street." Wondering at the large crowds who came to see a new "kosher bacon" meat-slicer at work in a shop window, Rosenfeld speculated that Jewish dietary laws were really a displaced form of sexual repression. The separation of milk and meat, *milchig* and *fleishig*, represented, in Rosenfeld's unsophisticated quasi-Freudian code, the separation of men and women; and the ban on *treif* was really a ban on sexual contact with non-Jews. To prove his point, Rosenfeld re-told a Jewish joke about "the man with cancer of the penis" who is "advised by the doctor to soak his penis in hot water. His wife, finding him so engaged, cries out, 'Cancer schmancer. *Dos iz a milchig teppel!*—Who cares about cancer? You're using a dairy pot!'"

To Rosenfeld and his fellow intellectuals, this kind of half-serious, half-mocking Freudianism was a familiar style of discourse. But as Zipperstein shows, in one of his book's best sections, the readership of *Commentary* was not amused to find a magazine sponsored by the American Jewish Committee telling penis jokes. Rabbis and journalists launched a protest campaign, with one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

critic going so far as to call Rosenfeld's piece "worthy of the best efforts of Streicher and Goebbels." As Zipperstein observes, the whole incident reads like a preview of the controversy over Philip Roth's work a few years later (and also of Lenny Bruce's outrages to come), and for a time the editorial independence of *Commentary*, then just four years old, was in jeopardy. Until then a frequent contributor to its pages, Rosenfeld became persona non grata at the magazine for a few years.

The episode is also important for what it reveals about Rosenfeld's emotional life. To say that the laws of *kashrut* are "really" sexual taboos is meaningless, of course; but the fact that they felt that way to Rosenfeld, and to other American Jews of his generation, is historically interesting. Rosenfeld's flight from what he experienced as Jewish puritanism was so desperate that he flung himself, as if for salvation, into the sexual utopianism of Reich. It was the Jewish intellectual's revenge on Jewishness and on intellect. For if the Rosenfeld we see in "Zetland" is precociously addicted to thinking, the Rosenfeld we come to know in *Passage from Home* finds that intellect cannot give him self-knowledge or ease his transition to adulthood. It is deeply poignant to contrast Bellow's idealized portrait of Rosenfeld's brilliant adolescence with Rosenfeld's own pained recollection:

> [T]he brief period of excitement I had known about a year earlier, when I had first begun to read books that were well over my head, was now entirely dissipated. What exaltation that had been! I remembered how I had read *First Principles*, all of a fall and winter, had gone over each page several times and copied whole sections in a notebook to force what sense and meaning I could out of the heavy text. I had also read Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and had gone about for days in a great wild excitement, feeling there was light in me, strength and courage, an infinite capacity and hunger to understand life.... Now, on a dull summer day, alone in a strange house, I could find nothing to turn to, nothing to call me out of myself, no energy, no strength, no comfort.

The intellectual helpless before his own life was, for Bellow, a figure of high comedy, most notably in *Herzog*. For Rosenfeld, however, being such a man was no joke. One can measure his unhappiness by the abjection to which he was willing to submit in becoming a Reichian. That difference suggests something important about the selflessness of the artist, which can appear from the outside as a species of egotism. For Rosenfeld, the self, its happiness and its perfection, was the most important problem, as it is for most people; and he gave his best energies to solving it. Kazin captured this fact about Rosenfeld when he wrote that "I could never be sure how serious Isaac was about *writing*.... He became too busy trying his life out. He lived not like a writer but like a character in search of a plot."

Bellow, on the other hand, accepted his self completely, with what looked at times like carelessness or insolence, so that he could turn his attention to writing. "He's poured everything into his work, which seems to be all he lives for," Rosenfeld wrote about Bellow near the end of his life. "He's really very sad and the 'literary figure' and the self-consciousness don't hide it." But neither does Rosenfeld's mock-pity hide his jealousy of a friend who refused self-consciousness of the parochial or crippling kind, so that he could be conscious of more interesting and important things.

Zipperstein ends *Rosenfeld's Lives* with a reverie on the books that Rosenfeld might have written if he had lived longer. He is confident that his hero would have produced "a body of literature at home with itself, with a voice as intelligent as Bellow's ... but, perhaps, still more intimately attuned to what it feels like to seek, hard and honestly and uncompromisingly, to be a truly good person and a truly good artist." In this way, Zipperstein's lack of confidence in his subject turns into an unjustified inflation of him—though even here, the comparison with Bellow follows Rosenfeld like a curse.

The potential is always more alluring than the actual, not least when it can never be tested. But the real lesson of Rosenfeld's story may be that there is a basic conflict between being a truly good—or, as Reich and Rosenfeld might have put it, a fully "genital"—human being, and being a truly good artist. Rosenfeld movingly described the ambition of the great artist—"I want to write so that light spreads from my pages, and every thing I touch takes on reality. I know why people want immortality. You just haven't got time enough in this world, and the possibilities of human perfection and happiness are infinite"—but its fulfillment was beyond him. ◆

Gordon S. Wood
REVOLUTIONARY MANNERS

THE STATE AS A WORK OF ART: THE CULTURAL ORIGINS OF THE CONSTITUTION
By Eric Slauter
(University of Chicago Press, 373 pp., $40)

Over the past two decades or so, sixty-nine countries—from the nations of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, to South Africa, to Afghanistan and Iraq—have drafted constitutions. At the same time many other states have revised their constitutions on paper, and even the European Union has tried to get a constitution ratified. Consequently, only a few states in the world are without written constitutions. Indeed, it is almost impossible for many people today to conceive of a constitution as anything but a written document.

It all began with the Americans over two centuries ago. Thomas Paine, writing in 1791 in the aftermath of the American Revolution, told the world what had happened over the previous decade and a half. Until the American Revolution, people had conceived of a constitution as the way in which a government was put together or constituted. But the experience of the Americans in writing their various state constitutions in 1776–1777, and then their federal Constitution a decade later, had transformed the meaning of a constitution. It had become, Paine said, a single written document, a thing that could be picked up and consulted: "It is the body of elements, to which you can refer, and quote article by article; and which contains ... every thing that relates to the complete organization of a civil government, and the principles on which it shall act, and by which it shall be bound." England had talked about its wonderful unwritten constitution

Gordon S. Wood's new book, Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815, in the Oxford History of the United States, will be published in October.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for decades, but as far as Paine and the Americans were concerned, England had no constitution at all.

In 1776 Americans had been exhilarated by the prospect of creating their own government. "How few of the human race," John Adams rejoiced, "have ever enjoyed an opportunity of making an election of government, more than of air, soil, or climate, for themselves or their children." All previous nations, they told themselves over and over, had been compelled to accept their constitutions from some conqueror or some supreme lawgiver, or had found themselves entrapped by a form of government molded by accident, caprice, or violence. But Americans knew that they were, as John Jay declared, "the first people whom heaven has favoured with an opportunity of deliberating upon, and choosing the forms of government under which they should live." They became the architects of their constitutions, and thus for them the state became a work of art, a distinctly artificial entity. Drawing out the implications of that idea in the making of the Constitution is the theme of Eric Slauter's richly imaginative book.

In the past century, we have had dozens upon dozens of studies of the origins of the Constitution. Historians, jurists, and legal scholars have all tried to explain the sources and the character of the document. Slauter's book is the first full-scale effort by a literary scholar to bring the special tools of his discipline to bear on the Constitution and its cultural origins. The result is a smart, strange, and frustrating book. It is a curious mixture of insight and artifice, of careful readings and runaway metaphors, of persuasive arguments and imaginative exaggerations. The historian's conception of causality is often bent out of shape, and the connections between events become ambiguous and elusive. Still, Slauter's prose is almost always clear and straightforward, avoiding all of the usual jargon that has plagued much literary writing over the past several decades. Slauter has divided his book into two parts: "The State as a Work of Art" and "The Culture of Natural Rights." Each of these parts has three chapters, only loosely related to one another. Consequently, the book is really a collection of six essays on various aspects of the cultural origins of American constitutionalism.

Slauter begins by emphasizing a point of which the American Revolutionaries were well aware—that governments and constitutions were the products of a society's manners, customs, and genius, and at the same time the producers of those cultural inclinations and distinctions. There was a mutual influence, a feedback and an interplay, between government and society, and it was the recognition of these relations that made an eighteenth-century theorist such as Montesquieu so subtle and significant. No doubt the nature of the government had to be adapted to the customs and the habits of the people, but the government itself could shape and reform the character of the people. "It is in the rich terrain of the period's shifting desire to see politics as an effect of culture and culture as an effect of politics," observes Slauter, "that it makes sense to consider, as I do in this book, the state as a work of art and the cultural origins of the Constitution of the United States."

Slauter's opening chapter, called "Making a Government of Laws," reveals a good deal of his literary method. He selects particular texts, mostly from the popular literature of the period, and then follows out the implications of one image after another in these texts. He begins with a discussion of the way in which the older classical-medieval tradition of thinking of the state as a human body fell away and was replaced by the idea of the state as an artificial man-made creation. Yet he scarcely seems to appreciate how powerful and long-lasting that tradition of the organic state was. "The figure of the body politic declined in both use and conceptual value over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he writes. "Never especially prevalent in the middle or southern colonies, it had come to seem relatively meaningless even in New England by [the time of the Revolution]."

This hardly seems true. The eighteenth-century remained preoccupied with the idea of the state's resemblance to a human being, with its birth, maturity, and eventual death. In 1774 the loyalist Samuel Seabury argued that England was still a "vigorous matron," in the prime of her life, and not at all, as his adversary Alexander Hamilton had described her, "an old, wrinkled, withered, worn-out hag." This sort of language in talking about states was much more common than Slauter admits. Indeed, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment was fascinated with the political health and the sickness of bodies politic and spent a great deal of time analyzing why states, especially the republics of antiquity, had declined and died. Rome, of course, was the prime example: the eighteenth century, including all educated Americans, could not learn enough about Rome. Its decline was described in terms of a human being: it was once young and industrious, but it grew rich and luxury-loving, and became corrupt and immoral, leading it to sloth and finally to death.

More awareness of this interest in "political pathology," as one American called this investigation of political diseases, might have sharpened Slauter's argument and given his idea of the state as a work of art more radical significance than he has given it. When Americans in the late 1780s began talking of the state in these architectural terms, they were not just changing images, but were opening up the possibility of an entirely new way of thinking about the state's durability and permanence. For if the state were an architectural creation, and not a human-like body, then it was presumably immune to the kinds of diseases that had afflicted the ancient republics. The new American federal constitution might in fact live forever.

Instead of exploring this interesting transformation, Slauter has chosen to focus on the connotations of what Hamilton in 1788, now thinking of "politics by analogy to architecture," called the "erection of a new government." This is a pity, but for a literary scholar such as Slauter the image of "erection" is too tempting to resist, and he launches into a lengthy analysis of its ambiguous meaning. The word "erection" retained some of its older physiological and sexual sense, he says, and was thus in tension with its newer architectural meaning. Tension or not, it is the sexual connotation that Slauter most exercises, especially since it relates to the "impotence" of the Confederation, which was the term that the Federalists, or the supporters of the Constitution, commonly used to disparage the government that they wanted to displace. Since sexual impotence could lead to divorce under English law, Americans, in Slauter's words, had "grounds for divorce or annulment of the Confederation." This conception of divorce became especially meaningful "within the larger metaphor of politics as marriage."

Once invoked, this image of government as marriage is too expressive to be dropped, and Slauter carries it on for several pages, even though very few Revolutionaries ever adduced it. He emphasizes how this image of marriage "between a male electorate and male politicians"—creating "a same-sex relationship"—seems to have given legitimacy to government as a "consensual contract," which he mistakenly identifies as a Lockean contract. Locke's contract was one among individ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uals to form a society. The contract for most Whigs in the eighteenth century, by contrast, was not a marriage contract but a mercantile-like one, between rulers and people, in which allegiance and protection were the considerations. For Locke, the rulers were trustees for the people, which is why his political thinking was so radical.

Even as enlightened anti-patriarchal thought transformed the metaphor of government as marriage, the image continued to retain much of its power. As evidence of this point, Slauter indicates that "on the eve of the Declaration of Independence, some politicians remarked on the similarities between courting women and courting votes." As additional evidence, Slauter finds one person in a private letter claiming that the Constitution was a bride with the people as the husband. "In such a context," Slauter concludes, "'impotence' may have found new political significance, especially as a justification for overriding the procedural barriers of amendment that made the Articles of Confederation a 'Perpetual Union.'" Playing with images in this helter-skelter manner is bound to make a historian very uneasy.

But Slauter is not yet done with sexual imagery in the making of the Constitution. He also stresses the importance of the words "firm" and "firmness" to the Federalists. Why else, he suggests, would they have so often condemned effeminacy, and used strong vertical columns as symbols for the state? "Given this context, it is probably no accident then that the icon for the ratification of the Constitution by the states was the image of individual pillars brought to erection by a divine hand, sometimes accompanied by the slogan 'it will yet rise.'" And once Slauter has let loose his hyperactive imagination, he can scarcely rein it in. Since one image, from 1789, containing twelve white pillars also had a black one sagging outside the new federal edifice (representing Rhode Island, which had not yet ratified the Constitution), Slauter can only conclude that "the whiteness of the columns takes on new significance with respect to the place of black persons in the new nation."

It is hard to know what to make of all this suggestive material. No doubt many contemporaries, including Joel Barlow, who seems to have been unique in making his knowledge explicit, were fully conscious of the erotic and phallic implications of the symbols of liberty—the liberty pole, the references to erection, and so on. But how wide and how deep in the society did this knowledge go? And what does it signify even if the knowledge was widely shared? The Oxford English Dictionary lists eight different meanings for the word "erection" in the eighteenth century, and only one of them involves a bodily organ. Slauter is well aware of the problem of deciphering words and images in a freewheeling manner. "To read the image at all," he writes, "is to risk interpretation beyond the boundaries of meaning contemporary historical agents may have assigned to it." Readers will have to decide for themselves how much of these titillating connections they are willing to accept.

Slauter moves on to explore an issue that has taken on greater significance for historians of the eighteenth century in the past several decades—the relation of politeness to politics. The fine arts, good taste, and even good manners had political implications for eighteenth-century thinkers. As the English philosopher Lord Shaftesbury had written, good taste and morality were allied: "the science of virtuosi and that of virtue itself become, in a manner, one and the same." Connoisseurship, politeness, and genteel refinement were connected with public morality and political leadership. Those who had good taste were enlightened, and those who were enlightened were virtuous. This was one reason why Jefferson was so eager to collect the best in the world of what was seen, thought, and said (and sipped, too).

Although Slauter's discussion of this issue is often garbled and unfocused, as it jumps about from text to text, from Hume to Burke to Montesquieu to Addison and Steele to Lord Kames to Hugh Blair to James Ralph to the fashions of women, he nonetheless illuminates the importance of politeness to the eighteenth-century Anglo-American world. In order to tie the issue of taste to the Constitution, Slauter spends a dozen pages on an interesting text by Noah Webster, published in 1787 under the pseudonym "A Citizen of America," which argued that the beauty of the Constitution could only be appreciated as a whole and only by an educated elite. This was true of any work of art, said Webster, and the Constitution, too, was to be regarded aesthetically. "Let every man examine the most perfect building by his own taste," he asserted, "and like some microscopic critics, condemn the whole for small deviations from the rules of architecture, and not a part of the best constructed fabric would escape. But let any man take a comprehensive view of the whole, and he will be pleased with the general beauty and proportions, and admire the structure."

In his next chapter, "The Matter and Meaning of Representation," Slauter pushes his literary techniques much too far, as least for this historian. Since he believes that "the connection between aesthetic and political representation has become both an object and a commonplace of contemporary critical thought," he wishes to apply this connection to the debate over the Constitution between the Federalists and their opponents, the Anti-Federalists. Although Slauter correctly recognizes that "representation was the most important political concept of the revolutionary era," he plays down the language that contemporaries used in debating the issue, and instead focuses on two images that figured in the debate: whether representatives were a miniature portrait of the people or a transcription of the people.

So in place of an analysis of actual and virtual representation, which is what the Federalists and Anti-Federalists argued over, Slauter launches into long and detailed discussions of miniature portrait painting and of the process of shorthand transcription of speeches. This is all interesting stuff, but it is only tangentially related to political representation as most people at the time understood the issue, which was whether gentry elites could represent ordinary people or ordinary people had to have men of their own kind, in all of their ethnic, religious, and occupational diversity, to speak for them. Slauter does acknowledge that the connections he draws "can sometimes seem overly clever or unconvincing," but he does not let his doubts deter him.

In the second part of his book, on "the culture of natural rights," Slauter continues to make connections between popular literary culture in the new republic and its constitution-making, some of which are fascinating but others decidedly far-fetched. In a discussion of slavery and the language of rights, he confronts what he calls "two powerful narratives" of the Revolutionary era—the changing meaning of the Declaration of Independence between 1776 and the 1790s, and the way in which the imperial debate spilled over to affect other issues, especially slavery.

For most Americans, says Slauter, the Declaration of Independence, including its second paragraph that emphasized inalienable rights and equality, was "an ephemeral and forgettable text." Only in the 1790s, when Jefferson, as the leader of the Republican Party, came to be celebrated by his followers as the document's "author"—much to John Adams's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chagrin—did the Declaration begin to acquire its modern significance. Yet not everyone ignored the Declaration, Slauter notes, or its emphasis on the self-evident truths of rights and equality. Blacks and other anti-slave activists certainly paid heed. They insisted that "blacks were or should be included in the contemporary declarations about equality and freedom." In sum, Slauter contends that "slaves were the animating but often buried referent for the language of rights."

Historians have long stressed that the Revolutionaries' emphasis on liberty and rights inevitably spilled over and created a growing opposition to slavery—a "contagion of liberty," as it has been called. But believing that the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence had very little immediate meaning for Americans, Slauter wants to reverse the connection, and to make anti-slavery, and the efforts of blacks themselves to end the institution, the more important source of the rights consciousness of Americans. The contradiction between slavery and the libertarian message of the Revolution, he writes, is not a sufficient explanation for the rise of anti-slavery. Not only is such an explanation "restrictive, giving too little weight to the influence of new cultural attitudes about blackness that helped contain the contagion [of liberty]," but, he insists, it also denies a proper role to the agency of blacks in bringing about their own freedom.

All this may be true enough, but it still seems a stretch to contend, as Slauter does, that "free and unfree blacks, in league with white activists, worked to place black slaves at the center of the language of rights." The American colonists, like all Englishmen, had always celebrated their rights. Indeed, since late medieval times the rights of Englishmen had been central to English identity. From the beginning of the Revolution to its end, Americans were preoccupied with their rights. That some of them came to worry about the inconsistency between fighting for freedom and the holding of slaves, and came to promote the natural rights of slaves, were the consequences, not the causes, of that preoccupation.

In other words, Americans did not need the Declaration of Independence to tell them what they believed about rights. They ignored the document for two decades because they took it, and its second paragraph, for granted. They had begun the imperial debate by claiming the rights of Englishmen, and had only converted these English rights into natural rights in 1774–1775, when separation from the British Empire became more or less inevitable. Slavery and anti-slavery were undoubtedly important to the Revolutionaries, but unfortunately never as important as we today think they ought to have been.

In order to explain why white Americans "(who so frequently compared themselves to slaves) were reluctant to expand the rhetoric of political slavery to include the real condition of black slaves"—a very legitimate historical problem—Slauter makes one of the strangest arguments in his book. He contends that the issue of race and rights becomes "more legible and meaningful when seen in the context of aesthetic disputes over neoclassicism." Although he admits that "the concerns of neoclassical aesthetics may seem far afield from issues of race and politics," he nonetheless contends that "a common metaphorical language" connects them.

What he seems to mean is that even before the Revolution, proto-romantic critics of neoclassicism were indicting artists for their "slavish" imitation of the classics—"slavish" having "come specifically to signify a lack of mental originality." Slauter suggests that this presumably imitative character of neoclassicism can be connected to the way in which whites tended to denigrate blacks in the eighteenth century. Many whites "increasingly described the mental faculties of black people as imitative," by which they meant "inferior to the mental faculties of white people." Since a British critic disparaged the poetry of Phyllis Wheatley for being "merely imitative," Slauter makes this enslaved Boston poet the center of his analysis.

Wheatley's book of poetry, he writes, "appeared at a particular moment of cultural transition: the beginning of the romantic movement against neoclassicism." The two movements, he further remarks, "were in tension," and the black poet from Boston was caught in the middle. While some criticized Wheatley for being "imitative," others celebrated her in romantic fashion for being "one of the greatest instances of pure, unassisted Genius, that the world ever produced." The debate over Wheatley's poetry helped to transform American culture, or as Slauter puts it: "The clash between neoclassicism and romanticism produced a discourse about cultural 'slavery' and the dangers of mental dependency."

There are many difficulties with this argument, not the least of which is Slauter's reification of these "two theories of cultural production." No one in the 1770s, especially in Boston, had the slightest notion of any "clash between neoclassicism and romanticism." The terms were not coined until the next century. And the more basic question is whether the invocation of these artistic entities contributes at all to Slauter's analysis of Wheatley's poetry and white Americans' reaction to slavery and anti-slavery.

Slauter believes that the 1770s in America witnessed "the emerging cultural revolution against neoclassicism"—an astonishing statement, since in fact it was neoclassicism that was just emerging in America, with the romantic movement far in the future. In the 1770s, Americans were just beginning to invoke the classical past as an inspiration for their republican revolution; and almost no one at the time thought that going back to the classics was "imitative" in any pejorative sense. The American Revolutionaries sought to imitate and to emulate antiquity, because they believed it contained those permanent and universal principles that transcended time, locality, and particularity. In fact, they made such a huge investment in neoclassicism and its commitment to the public purpose of art that the emergence of romanticism was seriously retarded in the United States. Wordsworth was severely condemned as too solitary a poet, and Pope remained the most popular poet in America well into the nineteenth century. So it seems both confusing and irrelevant for Slauter to bring these artistic theories into his discussion of Wheatley's poetry and the rise of black rights. Once he gets into actually analyzing her poetry, however, his talent for close reading of texts takes over and his writing becomes illuminating. Although Wheatley's poem "Niobe in Distress for her Children" is ostensibly about death and mourning, it can be also read, Slauter convincingly points out, as a comment on the debate between Britain and her colonies and on the debate over the inconsistency of slavery in a revolutionary age.

Slauter's discussion of "being alone in the age of the social contract" is stronger than his previous chapters. The issue that he raises—the problem of the hermit and solitude in a society dedicated to sociability—is fascinating, and his discussion of it is rich and suggestive. He quite shrewdly points out that the Americans' various declarations of rights "obviously walked a narrow line between construing such rights as importations from a solitary state or as creations of a social one." If rights were natural and existed in people's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hearts, then writing them down and putting them into texts made no sense, and might even endanger them. James Madison and some other Federalists made such an argument in their attempt to explain why the Constitution contained no bill of rights.

But even more important for Slauter's discussion of individual rights is his insight that "slavery presented a still larger problem, one that fundamentally altered the way in which the social contract and natural rights could be understood." If slaves existed outside of society and had no natural rights to their liberty—as Virginians, for example, argued—then society or government, rather than nature, implicitly turned out to be the source of rights.

Slauter says that passing from investigating formal political thought, such as that of *The Federalist*, "to the still largely under-studied world of late eighteenth-century American popular literature allows us to consider the ways in which the culture of solitude and privacy reflected on and participated in larger political discussions." How to bring the political culture and the popular culture intelligibly and persuasively together is the problem that he sets for himself, not merely in this chapter but in his entire book.

His final essay, called "The Godless Constitution and the Sacred Rights of Man," is the best in the book, mainly because Slauter keeps close to a fixed number of texts and keeps his often frenetic hermeneutical imagination under control. He acknowledges that the absence of God in the Constitution does not imply any sort of "secularization." Indeed, Americans needed God because he was the author of their natural rights. He goes on to point out that Jefferson, Madison, and others consciously sought to move beyond Locke's plea for toleration, which implied the establishment by the state of a dominant religion, to statements of true religious liberty. In all these discussions, he is very persuasive.

He offers very careful and intelligent readings of Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments," from 1785, and of Jefferson's Virginia Bill for Religious Freedom, written in 1779 but not passed until 1786. Although "freedom of conscience" was mentioned everywhere in the constitutional documents of the period, Slauter points out that Jefferson's Bill avoided the word "conscience" entirely, because the word had a religious potency that Jefferson did not like. Instead, Jefferson in his Bill used the words "opinion" or "opinions" when referring to religious beliefs—a practice that infuriated many Americans, since, unlike conscience, opinions come and go.

Slauter concludes with an analysis of Madison's drafting of what became the First Amendment. Madison originally wanted a preamble placed before the text of the Constitution that would restate the rights and the principles of the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. "Here, in Madison's proposed amendment," Slauter contends, "was the central political philosophy of the American Revolution—the idea that government was an artificial institution designed for the benefit of the people and that it could be changed when it did not benefit them." Unlike Jefferson, Madison made no mention of a Creator. Even if it were understood that God was the author of rights, government for him was a work of human art.

Perhaps this chapter alone vindicates Slauter's aim of using literary analysis to relate the popular culture to constitutional issues. But the overall problem of his literary approach to constitutionalism remains. Is it consistently helpful to rummage through popular literature looking for interesting texts relating to politics? Slauter realizes that "it is impossible to say how popular these texts were or how or by whom they were read." He recognizes also that "it might be easy, probably too easy, to read these texts" in too permissive a manner. Since "the relationship between culture and ideology is rarely one to one," he does not want his readings to "sound flat, forced and unidirectional." Instead, he tries throughout his book to offer "more nuanced, multidirectional" readings. He knows, too, that "to read history or politics into, rather than out of, popular literature will inevitably produce unsatisfying results." He wants the kinds of cultural materials he is using in his book to "be considered not simply as in dialogue with but as part of the history of political thought.... Cultural history, and especially the study of popular culture, can help us reshape our understandings of the 'constitutional era,' but it requires us to see popular texts as contexts for the period as well as to see the period as the context for them." It is a laudable goal. As the examples in some of his chapters indicate, it can sometimes be achieved. ◆

Sherwin B. Nuland
AUTONOMY AMUCK

PATIENT, HEAL THYSELF: HOW THE "NEW MEDICINE" PUTS THE PATIENT IN CHARGE
By Robert M. Veatch
(Oxford University Press, 287 pp., $29.95)

Long regarded as central to the contemporary understanding of medical ethics are four principles that must be satisfied in order to fulfill the requirements of moral decision-making. These principles are autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence. These terms are generally interpreted by ethicists in the following way: autonomy refers to the freedom of the patient to decide what is in his best interests, without interference from others; justice is the notion that no one should be deprived of any benefit to which he has a right, amounting, therefore, to fairness and equal opportunity in the way each individual is treated; beneficence is the physician's obligation to do only what will protect and promote the patient's well-being; and non-maleficence is the physician's obligation to avoid any undue harm to the patient.

In an ideal world, these principles would guide every transaction that takes place between doctor and patient, regardless of how seemingly insignificant it might be. That such a condition is met less often than wished is correctly attributed to the old paternalistic approach that continues to guide the attitudes of some physicians even now, when so much thought is being applied to the proper ingredients of the complex interaction that is called the doctor-patient relationship. Simply stated, too many physicians are still unwilling to cede any degree of autonomy to those they treat. This doctor-is-always-right attitude seeps into every aspect of the encounter between them, weakening the effectiveness of the other three principles.

Though moral axioms to guide the conduct of the practitioner have existed since the beginnings of the profession of healing, Western doctors are most likely to view the Hippocratic Oath of approximately two-and-a-half millennia ago

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the first codified set of statements to which they can look for guidance. The third paragraph of that famous declaration asserts, in unequivocal phrases, that "I will follow that system of regimen which according to ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous." The words of the Oath, revered and recited to the present day, clearly provide a warrant for paternalism—though such an attitude was already encouraged, as it still is, by the simple fact that the healer has always been possessed of a body of knowledge and skills unavailable to his patient.

As the centuries rolled by, that specialized corpus of abilities grew slowly larger, its acceleration magnified manyfold when real science entered medical thinking near the middle of the nineteenth century. At the same time, but not obviously related to the advent of biotechnology and molecular medicine in the 1960s, there occurred the social upheaval that manifested itself within the ancient art of healing as "the patient self-determination movement." As the bonds of unquestioned authoritarianism in all arenas were thrown off or loosened, patients began to demand a greater degree of participation in deciding how they should be treated. And all the while clinical decision-making was becoming increasingly complex, and its interplay with considerations of ethics and morality came to the forefront as never before, especially as certain high-profile cases made their appearance before the courts.

It was largely in response to this situation that men and women with backgrounds in philosophy, law, social science, and religion began to turn their attention to ethical problems in the care of the sick. Along with like-minded physicians, these thinkers produced an ever-increasing number of articles and books in which they turned their analytical and practical skills toward what was rapidly becoming a professional field known as biomedical ethics. It came as no surprise that one of the motivating factors in the rise of this specialized area of interest was the recognition that the traditional paternalism was no longer acceptable, and needed to be replaced by autonomy.

The principle of autonomy holds that, except in cases of incapacity, the patient is a rational person with rights, opinions, and aims, who is the final arbiter of his or her own best interests. This makes particularly cogent the Hippocratic Oath's second reference to benefit, as follows: "Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick." Here there is no mention of the physician's determining the best course, but merely what will benefit the patient. That benefit is best determined by the patient, albeit with medical advice. It is imperative that the patient be fully informed, and that he enter into a discussion of the factors included in his own decision about what he considers best for himself.

But this has never been enough to satisfy Robert Veatch. Veatch is one of our nation's best-known ethicists, and for decades he has promoted the notion that autonomy, as it is understood by most of his colleagues in the specialty, and however prominent its role in modern medicine, falls short of what is really needed, which Veatch calls postmodern medicine, in which patients possess total control. This brave new world of healing, he insists, is already "irreversibly launched as the replacement for what is now old-fashioned modern medicine.... It is a world in which physicians and health professionals will become assistants of patient [*sic*] who will have to take charge and heal themselves."

Old-fashioned autonomy, in Veatch's view, allows the patient to make informed decisions involving strictly medical concerns, but such decisions may conflict with other of his interests beside physical health. Every choice, Veatch asserts, must make allowances for the individual patient's distinctive and unique system of beliefs and values, about which the physician cannot possibly be an authority. The Hippocratic "benefit of the sick" includes ingredients known only to the sick, and so they must be included in any consideration of what is in the totality of their best interests. One or several of these considerations may cause the patient to sacrifice a strictly medical good for one that he regards as more important to his complete well-being, not only physical but also emotional, moral, and spiritual.

With some instances of this radical vision the autonomy-conscious physician can have no quarrel. As a wise and very experienced oncology nurse once pointed out to my hospital's ethics committee, "For some people, suffering through the anguishing side effects of an offered treatment is simply not worth enduring, when they consider what they will have when they come out the other end." Every clinician is familiar with such a determined viewpoint, and it takes a hard-headed paternalist to argue against it.

But the moral-clinical situation is rarely so clear. In some circumstances the complete surrender of the physician's authority to the patient would probably be viewed by him as downright misguided. What physician would not do everything he could to convince a composer, for example, that his determination to finish writing his symphony before starting debilitating chemotherapy is likely to cost him his life? Consider also the mother of a high-school wrestler who insists on going to this evening's championship match ("It will only delay the operation a couple of hours, doc!") even if it will result in the spreading of her peritonitis. Veatch, if we are to take him at his word, would declare that his postmodern medicine demands absolute respect for the patient's system of values in such instances. Were he responsible for the care of one of these two people, or of the many others like them encountered in any physician's lifetime, he would see no reason not to abandon his role as non-voting advisor, in the interests of his patient's total independence of the influence of anything merely professional.

Veatch provides two other categories in which a patient's values should be allowed to override medical opinion. The first of these is a situation in which it might be the patient's perception that helping him could be to the disadvantage of some other person. Principles such as loyalty, fidelity to promises, or allegiances to a particular code of honor come into play in such cases. And there is also the worry about possible harm to another, such as the example of a man who refuses a kidney transplant from his identical twin for fear that his brother will sustain unexpected complications, though that likelihood is remote. And Veatch next moves on to those cases in which a medical benefit to the patient might result in the loss of some perceived greater good for society. An example of this sort of thinking is to be found in the case of a fifty-eight-year-old man who refuses his insurance company's offer to pay for a very expensive experimental operation with a high mortality rate because he feels that the money might better be used for other, more certain purposes to help some other person or persons.

In none of these sorts of instances, Veatch tells us, would it make sense for the physician to prescribe "or even recommend any treatment, let alone give 'orders' or claim they know what is best for

ANTHONY RUSSO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the patient." In asserting his certainty that this is the right thing to do, Veatch goes far beyond autonomy as it is currently understood, and proclaims the complete independence of patients from medical opinion. He does this perhaps most forcefully in the chapter from which the foregoing quote is taken, entitled "The New, Limited, Twenty-First-Century Role for Physicians as Patient Assistants."

If this line of reasoning is followed, the physician should never presume to know how to prescribe medications for any individual under his care, since he cannot be in a position to understand the personal values that might be involved in various elements of the latter's treatment, such as which pharmacological entity to choose; the dosage form (oral, whether pill or liquid; injection, whether intravenous, intramuscular, or subcutaneous); the manufacturer; generic or standard brand; the quantity of dosage; and the duration of treatment. "Each of these choices," Veatch instructs, "should be made based on the patient's values, not those of the physician." The physician should limit his role to explaining all of the options to the patient, who will then make choices based on his own values, of which the strictly scientific aspects of the disease and range of possible approaches are only so many factors in his entire worldview.

In Veatch's ideal version of his postmodern medicine, all pharmacological agents would be sold on the free market and available to everyone, just as we sell many other chemicals. There would no longer be any requirement for a physician's prescription. Instead, he or some other qualified medical authority could certify in writing the patient's competence to choose, and also certify his diagnosis, just to be sure that the person making the choices is not making them for the wrong reasons. The certifications having been made, the patient would then review his options and decide whether to take the medication, and in what way. If he chooses the treatment option in which his values and those of his doctor coincide—and even if he chooses another, if that is his preference—he would then go to the drugstore to make an appropriate purchase. The next step, as described by Veatch (whose degrees are in pharmacy and ethics and certainly not in medicine), is that "the pharmacist would counsel, review the physician's actions, and dispense (or sell) the medication, much as he or she does now. The result, however, would be a very new set of transactions and authority patterns."

In his choice of the term "authority patterns" lies an important clue to the origins of Veatch's proposals. As one reads his book, the impression becomes increasingly clear that since it is his purpose to place ultimate authority in the hands of the patient, he is desperate to wrest it from the hands of the doctor. He hates words such as "patient," whose etymology "conveys passivity and suffering." He feels much the same about such modern substitutes as "client" and "consumer." Any implication of language that fails to acknowledge what Veatch refers to as "the primacy of the patient" (he uses the word when it suits him, because it "will probably not go away")—such as "medically indicated treatment, treatment of choice, doctors [*sic*] orders or discharged from the hospital"—is to be abruptly discarded, though he is vague about what is to replace the traditional terminology.

He is vague about other matters as well, and sometimes frankly incorrect. What is meant, for example, by "early Judeo-Christian times?" Can Veatch so blithely ignore the realities of medical history that he believes (or deliberately misstates for the purposes of his argument) the Hippocratic period to have been a time at which "disease, for example, was seen as punishment from God for wrongful behavior," when it is well known that the Hippocratics were characterized by nothing so much as their separation of the etiology of disease from any supernatural cause? Can he really believe that "physicians cannot be expected to be able to predict what will benefit patients and protect them from harm. At best they can guess. They cannot be expected to guess correctly beyond what any ordinary citizen can"? Easily available codes of law or medical obligation belie such outrageous statements.

In his fury to scrap the entire Hippocratic ethic, which has for thousands of years provided a measure of dedication and perhaps even nobility to the medical profession, Veatch seems particularly bothered by the frequently quoted medical maxim "first, do no harm," because it is mistakenly thought to arise from the Hippocratic Oath or to have some other Hippocratic origin. He claims that he and several colleagues have made exhaustive searches, and "none of us can trace it back to either Greek or Latin medicine." Were he not so vexed that physicians could be capable of such lofty themes, he might have looked just a bit further, into Book I of the Hippocratic treatise where the following passage may be found, in the standard translation of Francis Adams from the Greek original:

> The physician must be able to tell the antecedents, know the present, and foretell the future—must mediate these things, and have two special objects in mind with respect to diseases, namely, to do good or to do no harm. The art [of medicine] consists in three things—the disease, the patient, and the physician. The physician is the servant of the art, and the patient must combat the disease along with the physician.

A writer who believes that the Hippocratic ethic should "be relegated to the ash heap of history" because it "makes no sense" in his postmodern world should look well to this brief passage, which not only embodies the principle of doing no harm, but also admonishes the physician to do precisely what Veatch claims he cannot do, namely "to be able to predict what will benefit patients and protect them from harm." An impossible assignment, as Veatch claims it to be? I think not. Veatch should also take note in this brief passage of the Hippocratic principle that the patient and the physician must combat the disease together.

It is precisely this—the partnering between physician and patient, each to contribute what his background and his abilities bring to the matter—that Veatch seems not to comprehend. He writes of caring for the sick with all the wisdom and authority of one who has never cared for the sick. From his position as self-appointed judge, his recommendations (more in the form of dictates, and of forecasts of an allegedly imminent future) reveal the thinking of a mind that is a stranger to the nuance, the subtlety, and the ever-changing nature of the relationship between each patient and his doctor. More than that, he seems not to know or care that the latter's recommendations, though they may be based on the facts that Veatch would have him turn over neutrally to the patient, are in the end the product of his careful judgment of what would most benefit the patient. Should the patient object to one or more of the doctor's recommendations, a kind of negotiation takes place in which the healer attempts to respond to every rejection of his advice.

For the doctor blindly to offer advice without also being its advocate is hardly in the therapeutic armamentarium of the modern scientific physician. That this should be so is the result of thousands of years in which the doctor has been taught, not only by his mentors but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also by his hours at the bedside, that his greatest contribution to restoring health is not his knowledge of the facts that Veatch would have him simply report to the patient without editorial comment, but rather the judgment that his training and his experience have taught him to apply. Far better than being relegated to the ash heap of history, the very first sentence of what have been called the Aphorisms of Hippocrates should be emblazoned on every medical mind: "Life is short, and the art [of medicine] is long; the occasion fleeting; experience fallacious, and judgment difficult."

If judgment is missing, the pertinent facts have no meaning and confer upon their possessor no competence or authority. Medical judgment can be taught—laboriously, in long periods of training—but it cannot be neatly handed over as the occasion demands it. It is the irreplaceable and untransferable contribution that the healer makes to the suffering individual who would be healed. Proper autonomy as practiced today recognizes that the patient's body is his to deal with as he chooses; but such autonomy will hardly be benefited by diminishing the would-be medical counselor to what Veatch calls a "Patient Assistant." Much to the contrary, in fact: every physician can tell plenty of stories about people who, when offered a choice of treatments, insisted that the decision be made by their physician.

In addition to his vexation that the medical care of the sick should be largely in the hands of physicians, Veatch carries his radical thinking into the care of the dying, and not only the medical aspects of that care. He decries the medical model upon which the hospice concept is built in the United States, and points out that such programs, because they must concern themselves with far more than the health of their residents, should not let medical services dominate them. Here it is much easier to accept his thinking, in view of the range of social services required by such people. He would go so far as to place the hospice benefit in the Social Security system rather than in any type of medical insurance, and he does not exclude Medicare, a change that might strike some people as more symbolic than real. "It would make it clearer that hospice is supposed to spend a significant portion of its budget and hire a significant portion of its staff to provide services having nothing really to do with health care."

A strong argument can be made for such a view, but it should not be made at the cost of what many, if not most, patients must endure while waiting for death. Pain, respiratory difficulty, bedsores, an inability to eat sufficient for even lessened metabolism, incontinence, confusion and plenty of other medical problems afflict the dying, who are most commonly admitted to the facility to control such symptoms, rather than to die peacefully with no need for therapies to relieve them. But Veatch believes that "medicalizing the hospice will inevitably overweight [*sic*] the membership [staff] with medically oriented people. The budget is likely to be centered on health services and health professional staff."

Veatch lists the health professionals who provide the medical care that he asserts "is only a minor part of hospice, just as it is a minor part in the rest of life." They are "doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and social workers (perhaps with dietitians, chaplains, and others who are connected with medical care)." His list of "non-medical specialists who provide much of what dying people need" consists of "housekeepers, clergy who are not chaplains, lawyers, educators, artists, accountants, and architects—all of whom should be critical to providing integrated support to dying people." While I would not denigrate the importance of the latter group, it seems perfectly plain to me that it is the former group which does most to relieve the suffering of the vast majority of hospice residents. And so I will continue to believe that the ideal hospice must be "medicalized" in order to provide for its residents' most urgent needs, albeit with the easy availability of Veatch's other listed staff and similar personnel.

In like manner and with like intent, Veatch turns his attention to such matters as health insurance, human experimentation, and outcomes research. (The latter is the long-term study by disinterested observers of various treatment options, so as to provide a consensus of experts.) In each case, he argues strongly that determinations should be taken out of the hands of physicians or other so-called "experts" and put completely under the control of patients, since only patients know their own values, without which correct and individual decisions cannot be made. In a final salvo, puzzlingly (since he provides no proof of such an accusation) titled "The Consensus of Medical Experts and Why It Is Wrong So Often," he goes even further than his previous statements that medical opinion should be limited to providing only the scientific facts. With the same certainty that characterizes the rest of his polemic, he makes the following unsubstantiated, and unsubstantiatable, statement: "To the extent that the groups of scientific experts have systematic value biases that shape their formulating and reporting of the facts, then even the consensus of the experts about the facts in a given area should be expected to be skewed." Veatch provides several possible solutions to this purported dilemma, and rejects them all. His readers are left with a topsy-turvy world, but maybe that was his plan all along. Veatch stands revealed as an *agent provocateur* of medical ethics. His cleverness has gotten the better of his compassion. What he prescribes, for both patients and doctors, is anarchy. ◆

July: Gile Mountain

Even that current rapid in the brain
like a digital signal cheeping "where
where where. . ." damps down in the broil of noon.

Below, the ponds and metal rooftops flare
to streaks. And my need, to peel the bright veneer
from the world, and walk inside, and feel my life

crucial as plotline. . . seems to disappear.
The aspens sizzle. Towers of loosestrife
shiver with flies. Somewhere a satellite

opens its shutter, clicks on freeways and fields.
Somewhere demonstrators, chanting, fight
to hold ground against the encroaching shields.

Somewhere a grizzly blinks at the sun motes.
And all that shimmering merge is elsewhere. Here
the world is oak leaf, stillness, blue. It floats

in the heat, goes liquid at the edge, then clear.
That digital tremor, that hard-wired yearning
saying that just beyond beyond beyond

real life lies waiting: even its returning
now is not distraction, but feels bound
to this fierce calm. The granite ledges glare

beneath the pine boughs, quaver, and the heart
flows out, right now, one thing with the others here:
shot through with light and natural and apart.

PETER CAMPION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rosanna Warren

LIFE AS A POEM

SONGBOOK: THE SELECTED POEMS OF UMBERTO SABA
Translated by George Hochfield and Leonard Nathan
(Yale University Press, 562 pp., $35)

Umberto Saba, a poet of mysterious and difficult simplicity, has been ushered back into English. The translation of poetry is never easy, but Saba presents particular challenges. Leonard Nathan, the poet and veteran translator who died in 2007, and George Hochfield have for the most part improved on earlier versions, and their selection from Saba's masterwork, *Il canzoniere*, or *The Songbook*, gives a good idea of the scope of that extraordinary monument.

Saba was born in Trieste in 1883, and lived most of his life in that seaside city of complex and mingled nationalities, the major port for the Austro-Hungarian Empire until it passed into Italian hands in 1918. By the time of Saba's death in 1957, he was regarded, along with Eugenio Montale and Giuseppe Ungaretti, as one of the master poets of Italy in the twentieth century, but even his admirers seem to apologize for him, and to scramble around for terms in which to assess his art. Saba belonged to no literary or political movement, though he was clearly anti-Fascist. When a friend asked him, "But what party do you belong to, when it comes down to it?" Saba quipped, "To the psychoanalytic party." Like his native city, he is difficult to situate and to define. The appearance of this selection in English, with its graceful notes, commentary, and bibliography, should enlarge the critical conversation about him, which is what he deserves.

The difficulties in reading this deceptively clear poet start with the question of names: his own name, and the name of his great book. Saba was born Umberto Poli, the child of a Jewish mother and a gentile father. Both families were poor. His father, after converting to Judaism, had floated away by the time his son was born, and Umberto would be twenty years old before meeting the vagabond sire. "He wandered the world like a pilgrim," recalled Saba in one of the sonnets of *Autobiography*, remembering also that the absent father had been "the assassin" in his mind until their meeting, when the young man recognized something of himself in this Ulysses figure, "cheerful and easygoing," who had Umberto's "blue-eyed look, / a smile, in bad times, gentle and sly." The mother's grief also shaped the poet's childhood: "Alone, at night, in her deserted bed, / my mother wept when I was born," he recounts in another sonnet in the sequence. Not by accident does this poem in Italian rhyme *letto*, bed, with *ghetto*.

The child felt himself torn between worlds: the mother's dark, cramped house in the Jewish quarter of Trieste, and the father's lackadaisical freedom. "They were two races in ancient conflict," he reflects in the "assassin" sonnet. This son of division was further torn between allegiance to his mother and an ardent love for his Slovenian wet nurse, Peppa Sabaz, with whom he lived for most of his first four years. It would be his fate, as man and poet, never to feel at ease anywhere.

It took him a while to father himself, even in the sense of finding a name. At nineteen, after a spotty education, he left his job in the office of a grain dealer in Trieste and lived a peripatetic life for a few years, making friends with artists, writers, and musicians; dabbling in university life in Pisa; and, most crucially, immersing himself in the Italian poetic tradition. He published his first poems under the aristocratic pseudonym Umberto da Montereale. It was not until 1911, when he was twenty-eight, that he took the more down-to-earth name Umberto Saba, which was emblazoned in the title of his first book: *Poems of Umberto Saba*. In 1928 he cast off his patronymic for good, changing his name legally from Poli to Saba.

The pseudonym has given rise to unstable interpretations. For years, critics recycled the false claim (never made by Saba) that *saba* means "bread" in Hebrew. Even Joseph Cary, Saba's best American critic, accepted that notion in the first edition of his groundbreaking book, *Three Modern Italian Poets: Saba, Ungaretti, Montale*. The second edition corrects the error, and gives useful information on the two major pseudonyms (and some minor ones). "Montereale," along with its D'Annunzian grandiosity, echoed the origins of Umberto's father's family in Montereale Valcellina; and "Saba," far from signifying bread, recalled the name of Umberto's beloved Peppa Sabaz. In an odd filching, the poet plucked the pen-name from his Triestine friend and mentor, the philosopher Giorgio Fano, who signed his articles "Saba" before yielding it to young Umberto. Years later Saba used yet another pseudonym, Giuseppe Caramandrei, when he wrote *Storia e cronostoria del Canzoniere*, or *History and Chronicle of the Songbook*, his remarkable self-exposition in prose.

The story of the name resembles a fable out of Borges. This was an author wildly in search of a persona. And if the name distills complex identities, personal and poetic, so does the title of *Il canzoniere*, the masterwork into which he gathered all his individual volumes of poems as they appeared. This collection, first published in 1921 and progressively elaborated, revised, and reprinted in Saba's lifetime, seems at first glance to align the modern poet with Petrarch, and thereby to make a staggeringly ambitious claim. We learn from *History*, however, that Saba adored Heine, and it has been suggested that an Italian translation of Heine's *Buch der Lieder*—called, of course, *Il canzoniere*—served as a more immediate model for Saba's book. One can see how Heine's lyricism, as well as his deracination from both Judaism and Christianity, and his discomfort in Germany and France, would have touched the Italian poet. Saba's title, evoking both Petrarch and Heine, blends his classical Italianness and his peripheral, Triestine internationalism.

More than most writers, Saba had to invent himself. "He is a poet constantly making himself up," Pasolini said of him, in a phrase more pungent in the original: "*Egli è un poeta in continuo farsi*." And here we approach the more intimate difficulty of Saba. He himself, writing as Caramandrei, described it in *History*, writing of Saba the poet in the third person: the problem of his "over-insistence on the facts of his own life … the so-called 'autobiographism' of Saba." The critic Alfredo Gargiulo attacked Saba in 1930 for his "fundamental incapacity to detach himself from quotidian fact, from the occasion, from prose" (as Saba summed it up in *History*). The accusation stung. Saba returns to it often in *His-*

Rosanna Warren is the author most recently of Fables Of the Self: Studies in Lyric Poetry (Norton).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tory, and the desire to justify his art against Gargiulo may have helped to inspire the book.

But as is often the case, a hostile critic may point sensitively to the source of strength in a poet without meaning to do so. The case for Saba depends on one's judgment of what he made of the raw materials of his own life. Saba puts the question into high relief, because his materials are rawly autobiographical, in a manner unusual for his time and his literary culture, and because he brought to those data a powerful apprenticeship in poetic tradition. He describes his need for tradition in one of the most moving sentences in *History*: "There was something in his inmost nature that had to lean on something most solid, most sure, something that had been tested in a long, the longest possible past, before setting out in the conquest of himself."

That conquest of self gave birth to a major poetic vocation. Saba inhabits his inner life with uncommon intensity and avowed egocentricity—but at the same time his detachment from self through the discipline of verse-craft and immersion in an ancient tradition produced a poetry of eerie lyric purity. It is an art at once self-absorbed and selfless, and it was thoroughly out of step with its age. In *History*, Saba called himself "backward and peripheral." His first books appeared in a period of high-modernist ferment in Italy and across Europe; but Saba's combination of traditional meters (the standard Italian line, the eleven-syllable *endecasillabo*, and its derivative, the seven-syllable *settenario*), traditional verse forms (sonnets, songs), and what Pasolini called "certain falsely ingenuous autobiographical crudities," all resulted in an art so original it took years to win recognition in the poet's own land.

Saba wrote a remarkably prescient account of his practice in his essay, "What Remains for Poets to Do," in 1911, the year he published his first book. The article was turned down by the Florentine literary review *La Voce*, and did not appear in print until after the author's death. One of the many riches of Hochfield's and Nathan's volume is their presentation of this piece. In it, the young Saba attacks the dominant strain of Italian poetry of his era, the magnificent rhetoric of D'Annunzio, which he contrasts with what he calls the "literary honesty" of Alessandro Manzoni. Saba elaborates a poetics of "sincerity," "honesty," and "originality," a description in part formal and stylistic, and in part genetic, in the sense of proposing a process of composition and a way of life that shapes it.

Saba's notion of sincerity has little to do with the narcissistic version embraced by Americans since the 1960s. Saba has something more rigorous in mind. In deposing D'Annunzio, he insists that poets engage in the dual disciplines of self-examination and submission to poetic tradition. The writer motivated only by the desire to be original "will never discover his true nature and never say anything unexpected. We must—don't take this literally—be original in spite of ourselves." Saba's account of this ascetic process rings as true today as it did in 1911, since every era has its fashions and temptations, its poetic ostentations that obscure the valid discoveries: "A long discipline is thus necessary to prepare oneself to receive grace in a proper spirit; to make a daily scrutiny of conscience, reread oneself in those periods of stagnation when analysis is not possible, trying to remember the state of mind that generated the verses and making note with heroic meticulousness of the difference between the thought and what was written."

Saba produced his life's work trying to follow this "scrupulous honesty of researchers for truth." It is not easy to translate. "Poets are untranslatable," he declared, "especially poets like Saba who work more in 'tone' than in 'images.'" The translator of Saba must find a mode for one of the most delicately pitched voices in all modern poetry—a voice simple, conversational, almost naked, resonating with older echoes without appearing in the least literary. The best descriptions of this voice come, not surprisingly, from two of Italy's finest poets. In 1926, Montale wrote of Saba's *Trieste and a Woman* that "here are set all the most original features of the 'early Saba': a music almost stripped of plasticity and high relief, delight in diction that seems commonplace but that is in fact, estranged: words which vanish into the page as soon as they are released, to create an indescribable background, an indescribable second interior space redolent of Lieder and distance, of nostalgia and ungraspable presences." And Pasolini pointed to something similar: "There is no word in Saba—the most common, the '*cuore-amore*' of the famous rhyme—that doesn't turn out to be intimately violated, roughed up and wrenched from its normal meaning, its normal semantic tone."

A SHILLING LIFE gives the facts that produced this singular talent. After his unsettled childhood and uneven schooling, Saba had, as he said, to create a culture for himself. He worked briefly as a clerk in Trieste; wandered in and out of literary circles in Florence, Milan and Trieste; and did military service in 1907–1908. In 1909 he married the seamstress Carolina Wölfler, the Lina who would appear in many poems. Their child, Linuccia, was born a year later, and one notes sadly that Saba recapitulated the conditions of his own childhood by sending the baby out to a wet nurse so that his wife could concentrate on taking care of him. Understandably unhappy, Lina took a lover, and for a while set up house with her baby and him, an art teacher who was a friend of Saba's. (Not the Vito Timmel mentioned in Hochfield's and Nathan's notes, by the way: this is one of their few factual errors.) This matrimonial kerfuffle resulted in what some consider Saba's best book, *Trieste and a Woman*. It was, in any case, resolved in fairly short order, with Lina and the baby returning home.

Saba moved the family to Milan for a year to manage a cabaret, an enterprise cut short by the outbreak of World War I. He served in the army in noncombatant roles during the war, and in 1919 returned to Trieste to take over the antiquarian bookshop, the Libreria Antica e Moderna, where he would earn his living for many years, until he was dispossessed by the "racial laws" of Fascist Italy in 1938. During World War II, and especially after the Nazi occupation of Italy in 1943, Saba (who had never identified himself as Jewish) and his family were in danger of deportation, and hid in Florence, moving from house to house, including Montale's. This unpolitical poet would later learn that lines from his "Sixth Fugue" were found scrawled on the wall of a Gestapo torture cell in Florence.

During this period of internal exile and persecution, Saba started writing *History and Chronicle of the Songbook*, which he published in 1948. In his last years, he struggled with ill health, and also with depression, which had always haunted him. He also received the official recognition that had earlier eluded him, and won many prizes. Lina died in 1956, and Saba followed her a year later.

FROM THIS skeletal account, one may derive the main elements of the story, and the key images and preoccupations, from which Saba would build his poems: the errant father, the lost paradise of Peppa's house, the city of Trieste, the innocent and then tormented love for his wife, melancholy, solitude, and sexual desire, including some lightly sketched yearning for boys. The publication, after Saba's death, of *Ernesto*, his late and unfinished novel of sexual initiation of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

boy by an older man, alerted his readers to expressions of homoeroticism in the poems; but it seems fair to say that Saba's longing for women outweighed his other desires. By poring over his feelings until he discovered their true strangeness, Saba created himself. His real father, the procreator of his poetic voice, was Leopardi, Italy's greatest poet of the nineteenth century. From him, Saba inherited the mixture of Romantic plangency and Classical stoicism that gave his own work its peculiar timbre.

Hochfield and Nathan were right to open their volume with "The Admonition," the first poem of *Il canzoniere*. It takes an act of historical imagination for the contemporary American reader to discern the force and the novelty of this delicate poem. We have had a century of plain-style modern poetry in English, and the singularity of Saba's four youthful quatrains—one of his earliest poems, composed in late adolescence—needs to be felt as both a homage to Leopardi and a defiance of D'Annunzian grandiosity. Nor should it be confused with the rather airless, willed smallness of design embraced by the loose group of anti- D'Annunzian poets of his day, known as the Crepuscolari. "The Admonition" is far from one of Saba's strongest poems, but it gives us an opening into his world, and to the trouble that he makes for translators.

The poem addresses a cloud (a recurrent image for Saba) in lines of seven, seven, seven, and six syllables, with lines two and three of each quatrain rhymed, and the last lines of each quatrain rhymed in successive pairs. The first stanza reads:

Che fai nel ciel sereno
bel nuvolo rosato,
acceso, e vagheggiato
dall' aurora del dì?

Hochfield and Nathan translate this as:

What are you doing in the serene
dawn sky, beautiful
rose-red cloud, aflame
and lovingly gazed at?

One notes, first, that Saba echoes his master Leopardi's "*Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia*," or "Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia," which starts, "*Che fai, tu, luna, in ciel*? *Dimmi, che fai*?," or "What are you doing, moon, in the sky? Tell me, what are you doing?" Saba imitates not only the direct address to something in the sky, but more importantly Leopardi's intimate and colloquial tone. He compares the cloud in its dissolution to the youth whose light will also fade—"the azure lights gone out, / no more to see around you / friends and native sky." A great deal of Saba's subsequent verse is limned here, in these chrysalis stanzas: a feeling of doomed joy, a sensation of transience, a disturbed relation to friends and to that loaded phrase, "*patrio ciel*"—literally "native sky," but also in the sense of *patria*, fatherland for a fatherless son.

A glance at the competition reveals both Saba's art and that of his new translators. Hochfield's and Nathan's most serious rival, Stephen Sartarelli, did not include "The Admonition" in his version of *Songbook*, which appeared in 1998. But Felix Stefanile, in *Umberto Saba: Thirty-One Poems*, from 1978, shows how not to translate these lines:

Bright cloud in the clear sky,
what are you doing there,
a light-struck mariner
solicited by dawn?

There is not one thing right about that stanza, beginning with the banal first word, "bright," and the burying of the energetic question in the second line. The concocted metaphor of the mariner (jammed in to rhyme with "there," I suppose); the ostentatious compound epithet "light-struck"; and worst of all, the queasily sexual suggestion in "solicited"—all run against the grain of Saba's poem. As Saba insists over and over in *History*, he was not a "literary" poet. He learned from Leopardi how to rebel against the stylistic conventions of his own age. Stefanile has imposed an alien poetics upon him. But Hochfield and Nathan, by not striving for the central rhyme, preserve Saba's clarity and candor, and make up for the lost rhyme with alliteration: serene/sky, rose-red, beautiful/aflame.

In the sonnet "My Wet Nurse's House," Saba describes the scene of his childhood happiness with Peppa and her husband—a scene that he will revisit time and again in later poems such as "Three Streets" in *Trieste and a Woman*. The sonnet sketches the essential landscape: the view of the city from above, the old graveyard (a Jewish cemetery, we learn later from "Three Streets"), the placement of the speaker as solitary but drawn to affectionate companionship. The sonnet concludes, in Hochfield's and Nathan's precise calibration of the Italian:

To God I offered up a serene spirit,
and from the house a sound of
dear voices
reached me, and the smell of supper.

Saba thought his first real poem was the longer and, as he said, "most imperfect" one called "To Mamma." In it, he first tried to come to grips with urgent psychic material, and he kept revising the poem for thirty years before reverting to the original version for the later *Canzoniere*. One can well imagine why the son would have spent years struggling not only with the poem, but with his feelings about the mother with whose grief he partly identified, and whom he resented first for having cast him off to a wet nurse and then for having stolen him away from that attachment. "To Mamma" does not touch on his mother's Jewishness, but in many other writings, verse and prose, Saba's uneasiness with his mother lines up with his rejection of his own Jewishness—his sense that with his mother's religion he inherited also her sadness—an ancestral sadness, in his eyes. The poem begins:

Mamma, the day is tedious,
and a subtle
melancholy steals in from things
in every life.…

In *History*, Saba does not spare himself: "Already that 'subtle' and that 'steals in' ruin everything," he complains: they are banal. Yet the poem has a large breath, and in spacious passages presents the bustle of Trieste in its Sunday promenade as observed by the weeping mother, immured in her house. Saba, who will grow into one of the great poets of city life, is beginning here to feel his own strength, the scope and the tone of his talent.

Hochfield and Nathan have produced a translation far superior to Stefanile's and Sartarelli's, but there are a few missteps. Pronoun case bedevils "Three Poems for My Wet Nurse," a much later poem recalling Peppa, from *Little Berto*, the book that Saba wrote in 1929–1931 during his time in psychoanalysis:

I return
to the breast of she who still calls me
Berto, to the first, the beloved breast,
to the green Edens of childhood.

The impudent thought arises that perhaps it is the idea of breasts that distracts these excellent translators, since one of the only instances of their diction going awry occurs in an erotic poem in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Loving Thorn from 1920, when Saba's attention had wandered from Lina to several girls, and one of these nymphs, Chiaretta, is seen as "a young miss / with limpid breasts." Notwithstanding the semantic accuracy of "limpid" for the Italian "*limpidi*," in the sense of "clear" or "calm," it is hard to avoid seeing "limp breasts" in the English "limpid," an unfortunate image not at all suitable for the little houri who beguiled the elder poet.

In only a few cases do Hochfield and Nathan misconstrue the Italian. In the sonnet "The Joke" from Saba's *Military Verses* (1908), the poems in which he experimented more and more boldly with spoken language and achieved solidarity with common people for the first time in his life, the English in the last tercet makes no sense, and mixes up the subjects and objects:

> Here where they've sent the whores
> who have them all. And if I keep my
> mouth shut,
> he tells me that I look like Jesus Christ.

The Italian, though colloquial, has no such muddle: "*Qui dove l'han mandato le puttane / ce l'hanno tutte…*" Literally, this means: "Here where they've sent *him*, they [the soldiers] have all the whores."

Pronouns aside, Saba emerges as a poet powerfully drawn to figures of mothers and girls, as well as to cityscapes. He also loved animals, in a manner so forthright it has been called Franciscan. Consider "The Goat," the poem by which he is best known outside of Italy, from *House and Countryside* (1909–1910), in which he celebrated the early days of his marriage. The poem is worth giving in full. It shows Saba in mature command of his resources, an art of plain speech and infinitely subtle suggestion:

> I talked to a goat.
> She was alone in a pasture,
> and tethered.
> Stuffed with grass, soaked
> by the rain, she bleated.
>
> That monotonous bleating was brother
> to my sorrow. And I answered, first
> in jest, then because sorrow is eternal,
> has one voice and never changes.
> I heard this voice in the wails
> of a solitary goat.
>
> In a goat with a Semitic face,
> I heard all other pain lamenting,
> all other lives.

The Italian rhymes irregularly and gently, including the essential pair *semita* / *vita*, effects which Hochfield and Nathan do not try to reproduce directly. They have caught the poem's quietness, the tone on which its dignity depends. The Italian could not be more nude, more minimalist:

> *Ho parlato a una capra.*
> *Era sola sul prato, era legata.*
> *Sazia d'erba, bagnata*
> *dalla pioggia, belava.…*

Sartarelli's failure points up Hochfield's and Nathan's success. His first line already seems overblown: "I had a conversation with a goat." His second and third lines commit him to clumsy repetition (of "up") and to a phrase ("full up") that seems more suited to a gas station than to an animal: "She was tied up, alone, in a field. / Full up with grass, wet.…" In the last tercet, Hochfield and Nathan win hands down. Just where the Italian contracts, making its largest statement with the simplest means, Sartarelli turns up the volume, repeating "on earth" twice, words that don't appear at all in the original:

> *In una capra dal viso semita*
> *sentiva querelarsi ogni altro male,*
> *ogni altra vita.*
>
> In a goat with a Semitic face
> I heard the cry of every woe on earth,
> every life on earth.

Of such tiny but consequential choices are translations are made, and marred.

And what of Saba's Jewishness? As a young man, he cut himself off from his mother's faith, rejecting the Jewish law by which he would have been considered Jewish. In 1911, the year of his first book of poems, he wrote a set of stories called *The Jews*, treating his mother's family (which included the renowned Hebrew scholar Samuele David Luzzatto) as figures of exotic folklore. The stories are not unsympathetic, but are clearly written from a gently ironic distance. When "The Goat" gave rise to discussion, either of Saba's supposed identification with Jewish suffering or, conversely, of his supposed anti-Semitism, he protested that he had never intended such associations: "He had no conscious thought either for or against Jews." The goat's Semitic face was just a visual device in the poem, he claimed. He identified himself as an Italian Triestine, an identity that went unchallenged until the Fascist "racial laws." And that capacious identity spills out into the brilliant and original poems exploring the streets and squares, the small taverns and shops of Trieste, with their population of sailors, whores, derelicts, shopkeepers, and children—poems such as "Trieste," "Old Town," "Three Streets," and "The Suburb." Montale called Saba "the man of a real city and the man of a vaster and metaphorical *civitas*." Trieste gave him the map of that *civitas* in poems as various, surprising, and generous as the city itself. Saba needs to be read whole to be appreciated, and Hochfield's and Nathan's *Songbook*, though a selection, gives a living sense of that whole. To know Saba, one has to experience the almost abstract, musically organized "Fugues" of 1928–1929. And one has to read his fierce indictment of the Fascists and Germans, his love of Trieste, his sense of being Italian married to his sense of being a poet, all telescoped in the poem "I Had" from 1944:

> I had a beautiful city between the stony
> hills and the radiant sea. Mine
> because I was born there, more than
> others' mine,
> who discovered it as a child, and when
> adult
> I forever wedded it to Italy with my
> song.
> One had to live. And from many
> bad ways I chose the most worthy:
> a little
> shop of rare and antique books.
> Everything was taken from me by the
> bungling Fascist
> and the gluttonous German.…

Saba's achievement overflows the boundaries of any single poem, and now with this new translation, and the help of Joseph Cary's *Three Modern Italian Poets* and Cary's translations of a few key poems in his *A Ghost in Trieste*, English-speaking readers can at last begin to take the measure of, and perhaps to learn from, this deeply haunting poet. He never stopped seeking the "honesty" he set for himself as a goal in his youth. He knew it made him strong, and could make others strong. He often rhymed *canto* with *pianto*, song with lament, but still he faced the dark past and the uncertain future undaunted, as we see in these lines from "The Visit," the beautiful last poem of 1945:

> It's late. Cheerfully I face the cold
> outdoors. I have the song in my heart
> of a life
> where the blood was blood, the tears,
> tears.
> Italy was hardly aware of it. Ancient,
> it resists decay, like an oak. ◆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Diarist

A Footnote

In *The New Yorker* the other week, David Grossman reported on his discovery in Beersheba of an old man named Ze'ev Fleischer, who on November 19, 1942, came to the corner of Czacki Street and Mickiewicz Street, at the entrance to the ghetto in the town of Drohobycz, in Poland, right after Bruno Schulz was murdered there. He found a piece of bread in the bloodied writer's pocket: a last gift of sustenance from the mysterious man who was his teacher in high school. Fleischer arrived at the scene too late to corroborate the account of Schulz's death that we have from Jerzy Ficowski, the Polish writer and scholar who consecrated himself to Schulz's posterity, according to which Schulz was shot by a Gestapo officer named Karl Günther in revenge for the killing of a dentist named Löw, who had been murdered by a Gestapo officer named Felix Landau. Löw had been under Günther's protection, Schulz had been under Landau's protection. "You killed my Jew," Günther told Landau, "I killed yours." Ficowski had this account from an eyewitness named Izydor Friedman, a young lawyer who was surviving with Schulz by cataloguing a Jesuit library for the Nazis, and saving what they could of it. I was startled to meet Friedman alongside the Lincoln Financial Group advertorial. I know a bit about him. He survived the war by hiding for many months in a small chamber under a pigsty in a barn near an oil well in a hamlet called Schodnica. There were four other people with him in that wretched heaven-sent hole. One of them was my mother.

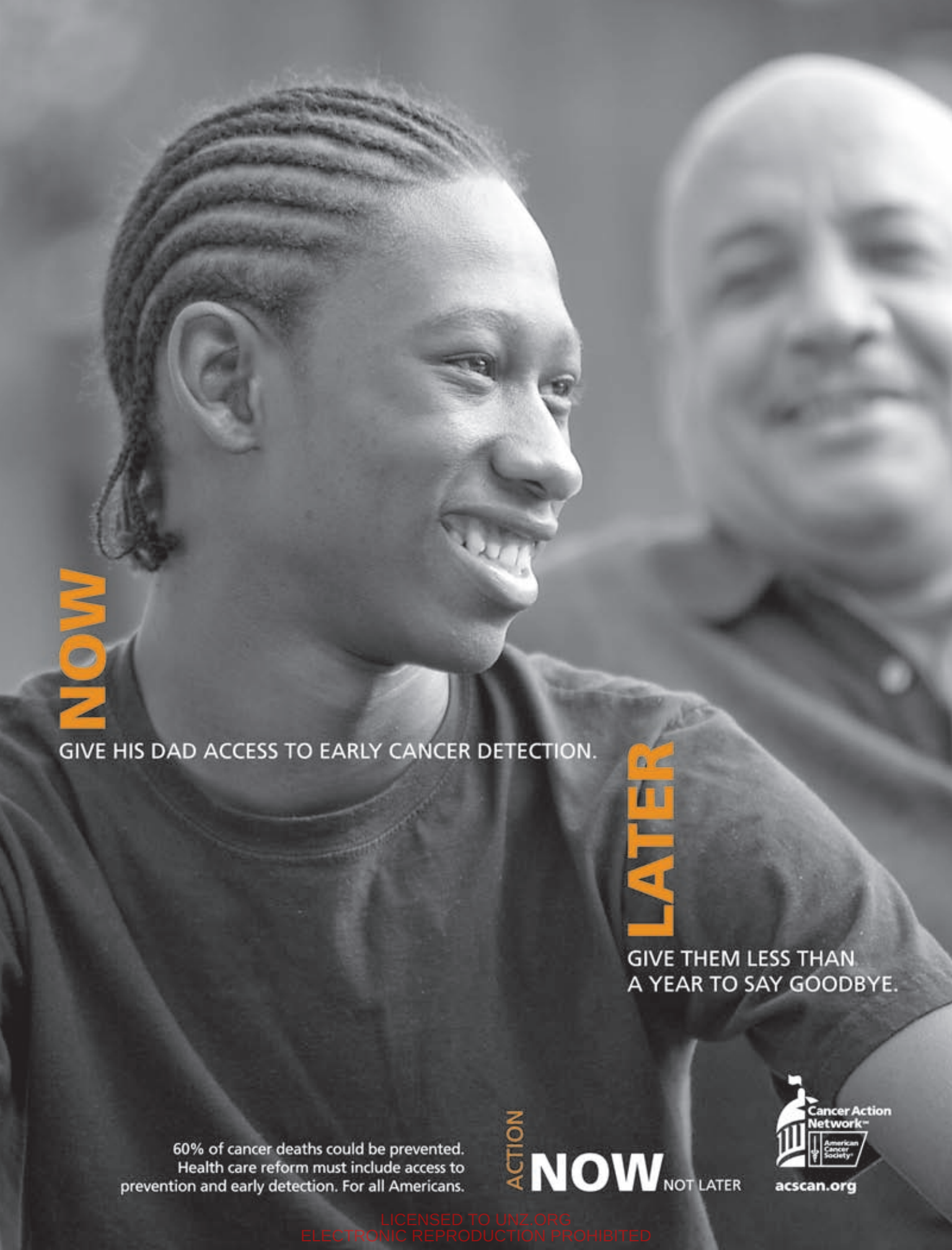
I wish to add a footnote to my friend's affecting piece. To the best of my knowledge, and I make no scholarly claims in the matter, the tale of Schulz's death may have first been told in English in 1961 in a shattering book called *Out of the Ashes*, by Leon Thorne. Below its subtitle, *The Story of a Survivor*, its jacket showed a crudely drawn phoenix rising from the flames with the Decalogue in its beak. Thorne began to compose his memoir of extinction and endurance in the hole under the barn—"six feet long and about four feet wide and about five feet high. We cannot stand upright, although we can lie down at full length.… I am writing while lying on my cot, leaning on the bucket of water which is covered by a thick piece of cardboard. This is my desk … It is difficult here, but we are satisfied because up above, in the light and in the sun, where one can stand upright and breathe fresh air, brutal death awaits us." Shortly after its publication, Thorne's book was reviewed with ferocious admiration by Isaac Bashevis Singer in the *Forward*, where he compared its embittering impact favorably to Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Proust—the hyperbole was a measure of how desperately Singer, like Thorne, wanted the unbelievable to be believed—and noted that it could be obtained through the Brooklyn Jewish Center on Eastern Parkway. Thorne was my cousin. He presided over our "family circle," a regular gathering of incompletely crushed people and their children, on Eastern Parkway. He was a forceful man with a booming voice and a probing mind, who had studied at the magnificent seminary in Breslau, whose historical and philosophical enlightenment would have outraged some of our pious kinfolk. When he, and his brother, and my mother, and Dr. Friedman, and Mrs. Mahler, climbed out of the hole on the morning of August 8, 1944, he became a captain and a chaplain in the Polish Free Army. He wrote about the years immediately after hell in a second volume of memoirs that has not yet been published—from which I realized, to my horror, if I have horror left, that the pogrom in Rzeszów on June 12, 1945, which originated in an allegation of ritual murder, and which Jan Gross valiantly documented in *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz*, may have begun in the very building, the very apartment, in which my parents, and the Thornes, and another cousin, had been clandestinely married in a proper Jewish ceremony a few weeks earlier, and that the assault on the Jews included (according to contemporary testimony) a hunt for "the previous occupant of the apartment, Rabbi Leib Thorn." *This* was their liberation. Between 1946 and 1948, Thorne served as the rabbi of the Jewish community—I can hardly picture this pastoral challenge—in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany. He died in 1978.

It was from *Out of the Ashes* that I learned, as a teenager, about the death of "the noted Polish-Jewish writer, Professor Bruno Schulz. The pride of the Jews of Drohobycz and of all Galicia," and about his life. I see now that Friedman must have told the story to Leib in the hole. Life in that pit of the living seems to have been an ordeal of terror and civilization: Leib writing, Friedman recalling a slaughtered genius, my mother reading Graetz's *History of the Jews*. (I cherish that work for many reasons, but for none so much as this.) Later I asked some of my relatives about Schulz. They remembered, in a somewhat scandalized tone, that members of our family had studied art with him at the gymnasium. They said that he was a pornographer (which is true, and an element of his glory) and a Marxist. The latter slander was no doubt owed to the Stalinist art that Schulz produced for the Russian occupiers, so as to live. I know a bit about Felix Landau, too. He was a hideous sadist. (It was in his house in Drohobycz that Schulz painted the children's frescoes that were smuggled to Jerusalem by secret agents of Yad Vashem—what other people's institutions of memory have secret agents?—in 2001.) My mother worked in Landau's villa for a time. She saw unspeakable things, and about most of them she has not spoken. Her girlfriend was shot by Landau in his garden for sport. When I visited the place a few years ago, helplessly I spat.

I offer all this not as historical knowledge, but as family knowledge. All this did not become history for me until later; and the distancings of historiography I welcomed not least as a sanctuary from the immediacy of the events, from the darkening effects of my particularity. I do not mean to overdo what I know. My grasp of this evil is an external grasp, even if I am my mother's son. I try to imagine, and fail to imagine, even her. On Eastern Parkway I learned epistemological humility. With all the love and all the solidarity in the world, there are frontiers of difference that cannot be crossed. Other existences are not so easily penetrated. Even when we do not dissimulate, we are opaque. It is useful, in America now, to be reminded of the temerity of empathy.

Leon Wieseltier

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


NOW
GIVE HIS DAD ACCESS TO EARLY CANCER DETECTION.
LATER
GIVE THEM LESS THAN
A YEAR TO SAY GOODBYE.
60% of cancer deaths could be prevented.
Health care reform must include access to
prevention and early detection. For all Americans.
ACTION NOW NOT LATER
Cancer Action Network
American Cancer Society
acscan.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The country that put a man on the moon can
cure cancer.
We've always embraced big challenges in this country. It's how the world sees us. How we see ourselves.
Now, President Obama has called on us to end cancer in our lifetime. America's pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies share that goal. Today, our scientists are working on 800 new medicines to fight this deadly disease that touches so many lives.
It won't be easy, and it won't happen without a renewed emphasis on innovation and a sustained commitment to research and development. Last year, we invested more than $65 billion to discover and develop medicines to help patients live longer, healthier and more productive lives. Like President Obama, we believe that America's best days are ahead of us. Working together, we can do anything.
PhRMA
New Medicines. New Hope.
www.PhRMA.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED